

THE CALL OF THE WOODS

PROPERTY OF JOHNIE SPEER

THE CALL OF THE WOODS

CHARACTER

Dave Ferguson A lumber Jack
Willis Hughes Dave's half brother
Doctor Quackenbush The Village Doctor
Flapjack Lescant A trapper
Mrs. Hughes The mother
Doris Keene An heiress
Hilda Lescant Flapjack's daughter

ACT ONE

Home of Mrs. Hughes near Moos Jaw, Canada.

ACT TWO

Flapjack's cabin-----one week later.

ACT THREE

Dave's lodgings near the saw mill, the day following

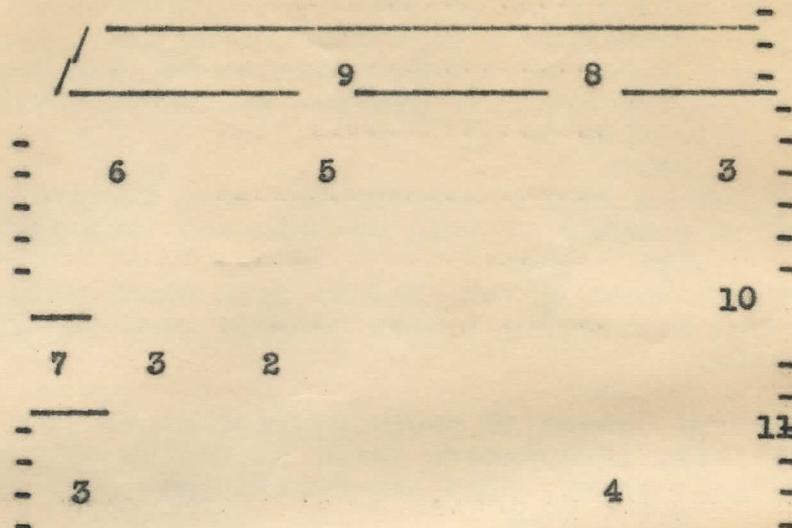
ACT FOUR

Judge's Chambers in court house, three months later

ACT FIRST

SCENE.....

SITTING ROOM OF MRS HUGHES



P O O T L I G H T S

1. Easy Chair
2. Stand table with cover on which newspapers old fashioned album
3. Chairs
4. Old fashioned settee
5. Organ and stool
6. Bureau
7. Hat rack with women's hat and cloak
8. Window with lace curtains
9. Exterior door
10. Fire place with fire. On mantel, are pieces of old fashioned
bric a brac, practical lamp. Two vases, old fashioned clock pointing
to ten minutes of nine.
11. Exterior backing old fashioned pictures, furniture, rag carpet, etc

(Arise, Mrs Hughes discovered in easy chair, is listening to what Doris has been reading to her. Doris discovered reading to Mrs. Hughes seated at her feet on stool, Hilda discovered arranging things on organ)

Doris

(as curtain rises, turns leaves of book, slight pause) Shall I read further Mrs Hughes?

Mrs Hughes

No. (takes hankie from pocket) It----it makes me sad. (wipes eyes) The story seems like a page from my own life and I can sympathize with the mother who has two boys, one good and the other bad. (Hilda crosses to bureau and arranges some articles. Mrs. Hughes and Doris pay no attention to her)

Doris

(closes book, lets it fall slowly to her lap) I think both of your boys are good. (Hilda glances quickly at them and then resumes work)

Mrs Hughes

There is no doubt about Willis for he is a model young man, honest up right and God fearing, but Dave (shakes head slowly) the less we say of him the better.

Doris

(aimlessly turning leaves of book) Perhaps it is your fault that Dave is not like Willis. (Mrs Hughes looks at her in surprise) You know that it is village gossip that you didn't love Dave even as a child, nor his father.

Mrs Hughes

He was killed in a drunken brawl at a saloon in Moose Jaw, he used to come home and abuse me. I guess that is why Dave was an unwelcome child. Its hard for a mother to confess, but it is the fact, I didn't want Dave. (Hilda glances down at table arranges papers and other articles)

Doris

(thoughtfully) And do you want Willis.

Mrs Hughes

Yes, his father my second husband was a fine man as ever preached a sermon, Willis is going to follow in his footsteps (Hilda glances up with a sneering smile) And some day be a great minister.

Doris

Dave might have been the same if you had shown him a mother's love.

Mrs Hughes

(shaking head slowly) He is his father over again, his companions are the lumber jacks and village rowdies.

Doris

You can't blame him for that since you, his own mother won't let him stay at home. (Hilda takes newspapers and places it on mantel)

Mrs Hughes

Now, Doris are you going to be like some of my other friends, and blame me for doing my duty.

Doris

(earnestly) I must. (Mrs Hughes glances at her in surprise) You say Dave stole money from your cash box (Hilda glances quickly at them)

Mrs Hughes

He stole money from my cash box, not once but twice. (Hilda takes piece of stove wood and puts it in fire place) Twenty five dollars the first time and fifty the second.

Doris

Did Dave confess to taking it?

Mrs Hughes

No, he denied it and I forgave him the first offence but couldn't the second.

Doris

Doris

And d dn't you suspect any one else? (hilda turns to them in startled manner, Mrs Hughes straightens up in indignation) Willis for instnce?

Mrs Hughes

(decidedly) I would rather cut off my right hand than let Willis think I doubt him. (hilda shows relieve) That's enough of Dave. (plances hand on Doris head) Lets talk about yourself.

Doris

I am so dull and uninteresting.

M s Hughes

(chuckles) Willis don't think so. (hilda glances around quickly, has vase in hand rubs dust from it with apron, shows decided interest, Doris look up in surprise) You are surprised?

Doris

(smiling) Certainly. (hilda watches them with intensity) Since when has he shown any interest in me?

Mrsm^mHughes

Since you have returned from college, he talks continually of you and I am sure the boy loves you. (Doris draws back in a mazement)

Hilda

(with exclamation of rage) Oh! (takes step forward then drops vase, they qui kly turn to her she shows embarrassment, Doris rises)

Mrs H ghes

What was that?

Hilda

(stooping to pick up pieces) I----I----broke heem.

Mrs Hughes

Not the one Willis gave me?

Hilda

(glancing at mantel sees other vase) No the one Dave brought you from Winnipeg.

Mrs Hughes

(relieved) Oh. (settles back in chair)

Doris

(crossing to Hilda) Let me help you Hilda (stoops to pick up pieces)

Hilda

(roughly brushing Doris hand away) I do heem myself . (looks defiantly at Doris who rises and shows surprise at Hilda's manner, Hilda puts pieces of vase in apron)

Mrs Hughes

(peevishly) Since I have been going blind it seems that every thing about the house is topsy tubry. (a little harshly) Hilda, you are a bad house girl. (Doris lays book on table)

Hilda

(raises eye brows and shrugs shoulders) My father heem like me, so I mare not. (snaps fingers) So much what you think. (resumes picking up pieces)

Mrs Hughes

Be more careful or I shall hire some one else.

Hilda

(affecting seriousness) Then I weep much----beeg cry I die. (X L 3)

(laughs heartily they look at her in amazement, she rises and starts to D L U turns to them seriously) I weep when I lose this job.

9(shakes head sadly wipes eyes, breaks out in hearty laugh and exits D L 3)

Mrs Hughes

(strikes staff on floor angrily) She is a heathn, bred and born.

Doris

(corssing L to fire place) Not a heath, Mrs. Hughes, say rather that she is a poor girl of the wilderneess. (picks up pieces of vase and lays them on mantæ) Who hasn't had any advantages.

Mrs Hughes

Willis has tried to teach her to read and write like - and talk like other people.

Doris

What success?

Mrs Hughes

Not much. Even old Flapjack, her father can't get her to speak good English. She gets it from her mother who was mixture of Canadian and French. You and Willis together mighty accomplish som thing. (turns to Doris and speaks earnestly) Doris, I am not going to beat about the bushes so I will come right out and say that I want you for a daughter in law.

Doris

You may get me some day.

Mrs Hughes

(eagerly) Then may I tell Willis? (rises with effort)

Doris

(quickly) Oh no.

Mrs Hughes

Yes, yes, the boy will be anxious to know it. (crosses C Doris rises nervously) I promised him I would speak to you about it.

Doris

But I didn't mean that I would be willing to marry Willis.

Mrs Hughes

You surely don't mean Dave.

Doris

Well, I surely do.

Mrs Hughes

No, no I won't have it. (Doris shows surprise, Mrs Hughes lays hand on Doris arm) You shan't throw yourself away on one so worthless.

Doris

He isn't worthless and I won't listen to anything against him.

Mrs Hughes

I am telling you he is like his fater and as sure as you marry him you'll regret it.

Doris

I have known Dave since childhood and hav always found him honorable and it will take more than your words to destroy my faith in him

Mrs Hughes

Would you marry him if you had positive proof of his guilt?

Doris

I can't say for sure. I don't believe I would. Yet my love might conquer my judgement. (smiles and gazes into fire) You must be careful how you speak about him to me because we are engaged and it is my duty to defend him.

Mrs Hughes

(surprised) Engaged? (X D L)

Doris

When he used to take me to school through the woods I said I'd marry him when I got big enough.

Mrs Hughes

(sitting right of table) Nonsense. You have been out in the world and broadened yourmind. You have seen life beyond these Northern woods. Dave is ignorant and unf t for you while Willis is intelligent and a man you wouldn't be ashamed to show to your friends.

Doris

Mrs. Hughes, I don't want to wound you, but we must understand each other, I would rather have ignorant Dave for a husband than intelligent Willis. If Dave is beneath my level, I'll use my education and money to lift him up. The promise I gave him as a child will stand until he says he doesn't want me so that settles the matter.

Mrs Hughes

(starts to rise) But---

Doris

(pleasantly but with decision) You can't change my heart by pleading for your favorite son, and you will only make me dislike Willis by referring to this again.

Mrs Hughes

It will be a great disappointment to the boy Willis.

Doris

It is about time he was experiencing a few disappointments. You have granted his every wish and made his life a bed of roses, what you done for Dave? No thing. You won't even love him, yet he would give his life for you. (turns to front place, Mrs. Hughes bows head thoughtfully) Willis enters D F) It is wicked, shamefull.

Willis

(coming down R) What is wicked and shamefull? (Mrs Hughes shows great delight, Doris quickly turns to Willis.)

Mrs Hughes

We----we were speaking of Dave.

Willis

(crosses to back of Mrs. Hughes, places hand on his shoulder in affectionate manner) Mother, you should not speak of him. (Doris shows indignation) Try and forget him and the disgrace he has brought upon us. (Doris starts indignantly to D R U Willis speaks quickly to her and crosses to C) Don't go, Doris.

Doris

(X to D L R) To speak of your brother in such a manner is an insult to me, and I won't say and hear it. (exit R U)

Willis

(after slight pause, comes down L) What did she mean by that?

Mrs Hughes

She loves him,

Willis

Are you sure?

Mrs Hughes

She told me herself. They have loved each other since childhood.

Willis

(X down to her) I knew they had an early love affair but I thought her four years at college would--see--cure her of it.

Mrs Hughes

(rising with effort) Don't give up hope, my son.

Willis

Her father would never consent to such an alliance. Why if they should marry Dave would squander her fortune by drinking and gambling.

Mrs Hughes

(crosses to Willis, she walks L) Well I turst the Lord to show her the error of her way. (lays hand in Willis arm) She is a good girl and I don't want to see her ruin her life.

Willis

How can we prevent it?

Mrs Hughes

It is our duty to convince her of Dave's guilt. Why I have known her ever since she was a baby and I'd feel guilty if I didn't do something to save her from such a fate.

Willis

You will convince her of his guilt so she will turn to me?

Mrs Hughes

(proudly) No. (Willis shows surprise) It must be done for her sake alone. Its sorrow and misery I want to spare her, I'm thinking of her happiness and I'd warn her against you as quickly as I would Dave if I thought

you unworthy.

Willis

(affectionately placing arm around her) But don't you think that I am worthy. If she is convinced of his guilt, we will hope that she finds consolation in my love.

Mrs Hughes

Aren't you the luckiest young man in the village? Who else suited for Doris. I'd like to know. (turns to table) But now to business. Son. (Willis glances at her, and shows nervousness) Did you pay the interest on the notes. (sits right of table)

Willis

Why----yes, of course. (X L C)

Mrs Hughes

Let me have the receipt and I will put it away. (turns to table and takes key from pocket)

Willis

I'll do it for you. (crosses to her and takes keys, X to dresser R U)

Mrs Hughes

It is so good of you to be thoughtful of me. (shakes head sadly) (Willis crosses to bureau R U opens drawer and takes out cash box) How I wish Dave were like you. (has face turned from him)

Willis

(opens cash box glances at her, smiles closes box with slight noise, and looks at it-- locks it. Does not place receipt in box) There is Mother, safe and sound. (leaves box on bureau crosses to her and gives her key. Hilda enters from D R U)

Hilda

(down back of table Willis crosses L) Your tea, her ready, Mrs Hughes.

Mrs Hughes

(rising Willis assists her) Come, Willis, I have waited tea so you would not have to eat alone. (Hilda makes slight start toward him, he notices it) (she shakes head no)

Willis

(assisting Mrs Hughes to D L U) I'll come in just a moment.

Mrs Hughes

Don't keep me waiting long for I am half starved. (exit D L)

Willis

(turns to Hilda and comes down L of table) What do you want?

Hilda

(about to embrace him) Kees. (holding up lips to him)

Willis

Oh don't be so impulsive.

Hilda

(ste's back shows wounded feelings) Is it you are tired of me?

Willis

No, but just because I have been gone for a few hours I don't want to be caressed like a long lost friend. (turns to fire place)

Hilda

(angrily) stepping toward him) Have you lied to me? (he turns to her insurprise) One day you say, Hilda I love you beeg I die much for you. (excitedly and a little louder, Willis shows concern for fear of being over heard) Then I love you here. (hand on heart) Here---(hand on head then with sweeping gesture of both hands) All over I love you.

Willis

(nervous and with caution) Not so loud.

Hilda

(pays no attention to his caution, speaks excitedly) You kees my hand. (holds out hand) My face---(puts hand to cheeks) and beg I be your wife.

Willis

(impatiently and crossing toward her D L U) I'll keep my promise.

(hilda shows surprise) I'll marry you

Hilda

(eagerly) Today---tomorrow---wehn

Willis

(impatiently as she crosses R) Oh someday there is no hurry.

Hilda

(steps after him speaks earnestly) All the time you say some day.

(angrily) It ees Miss Doris you love.

Willis

(turns quickly to her) Ridiculous. Be reasonable, Hilda. You know mother would never consent to my marrying you. (Hilda shows disappointment) Now so we must wait till you are more of a lady.

Hilda

She wants Mees Doris to marry you/ (Willis shows surprise) I hear her ask it. (fiercely as she steps toward him, he moves back a trifle) You beg my kees my hug and I give you hundred---a thousand because I love you deep and long, Marry me soon, make me grand wif e like you promise or I tell your mother. (Willis shows alarm) I see you steal two times the money from these box. (indicates bureau R U) and she wrong to blame Dave.

Willis

(greatly alarmed) Shhhh! (steps quickly up stage, glances L) You will ruin everything with your loud talking. (comes down C she turns to him) I'll keep faith in you but if I do anything against mother's wishes I'll lose the inheritance she has willed me.

Hilda

It is not money I want, it ees you whcih I love. (winds arms around his neck) I love you so beeg that I am what you call (sligh pause as if thinking then quickly with delight at having remembered) bug---house See I think queek what you tell me and some day I have much sense like you.

Willis

Of course you will, trust me, Hilda, and I will do all I promised.

Hilda

Kees! Kees! (holds up lips to him, he kisses her then in ecstasy) OOOOOO so good I feel so happy I like the tree bird.

Willis

(crossing L to settee with her) You mean like the birds in the trees.

Hilda

And when I am your wife. (turns to him) Like a hen bird I will peck.

(with thumbs and forefingers closed indicates pecking motion toward his eyes) and scratch. (indicates scratching with open hands) Your face (laughs gaily, takes him by hands and draws him toward settee R)

Willis

Hilda, I am sorry I am so cross with you. (X up back of her)

Hilda

I forgot queek.

Willis

I guess it was caused by the trouble I am in.

Hilda

Trouble?

Willis

Mother gave me fifty dollars to pay the interest on a note and I--- I---well when I got to Moose Jaw I played cards and lost it.

Hilda

You beeg fool!

Willis

I know it. If I can get the money tonight I can rush down and pay it in the morning and she will be none the wiser.

Hilda

Where you get so much moneys tonight?

Willis

(bends over her half sitting on arm of settee) (glances hastily around room) You can get it for me.

Hilda

Where?

Willis

Your father.

Hilda

So much then he ever give me in hese life.

Willis

You know where he hides it.

Hilda

Yes.

Willis

Can't you take it? (Hilda looks at him in amazement) Fifty dollars? (Hilda rises, looks steadily at him, he rises) Just borrow it for a few days and your father need never know. You'll do it for me, won't you Hilda. (places arm around her affectionately)

Hilda

(drawing away from him) NO! (he shows slight anger)

Willis

So that is the depth of your love for me, eh? You refuse to help me out when I need you. Nice wife you will make.

Hilda

Love is good honest and we love together, but you steal it ees bad and you do it alone. (Mrs Hughes appear D L U)

Mrs Hughes

(impatiently) Willis. (Hilda and Willis a ow surprise) Are you coming? (comes down L and sits in chair)

Willis

(confused) At once mother. (starts for D L U) Doctor knocks on door in flat, Willis crosses to door in flat)

Mrs Hughes

I wonder who that can be calling at this time or night. (Willis opens door)

Willis

(to Mrs. Hughes) It is Doctor Quacken bush. (to Dr) Come in, Dr (Dr enters followed by Eben)

Dr

(enters and comes down to table, places cane medicine case and hat on table) Good evening neighbors, good evening. (Eben crosses down to Hilda)

Mrs Hughes

Good evening, Dr. (crosses to table Willis comes down R)

Eben

(to Hilda) Howdy, Frenchie. (tickles her under chin, she promptly slaps him) Ouch! (Hilda exits up to window)

Doctor

Eben, you must behave yourself.

Eben

I aint doin' nothing.

Doctor

(to Mrs. HUGHES) Every time I take that boy any place he acts like a plumb donkey.

Eben

(sitting on setee laughs) I inherit it from you, pa. (Doctor looks sharply at him, Hilda crosses to Willis talks aside) Doctor turns to Mrs Hughes, lifts glasses from her eyes and looks at them in

a professional manner)

Doctor

How's the eyes?

Mrs Hughes

Worse.

Doctor

Um---ym---I'll have to change the treatment (Mrs Hughes sits L of Table)
Eben

Pa's eyes is gittin' bad to. (Doctor looks at him in amazement others show surprise)

Willis

(at window with Hilda) What's the matter with them?

Eben

Reckon he is going color blind.

Doctor

Not a bit of it.

Eben

Ye air too. (to others) On the wa over here he says to me, Eben, I've been treating old Widow Hughes nigh onto s x months and i aint never seen the color of her money. (Mrs Hughes and Willis show a little chargin, Doctor indignant, Mrs Hughes and Willis up R)

Doctor

Eben, where are yourmanners?

Eben

Last time I seen them they were floatin' up the erick on a peanut. (D R)

Mrs Hughes

(indignantly to Doctor) Doctor Quacken bush, I'll pay you the bill at once, -eome- and---

Doctor

Now, Mrs Hughes, don't get riled and do anything you will be sorry for I couldn't let you pay the bill now.

Eben

Pa, you aint got abit of sense. Why didn't you let her pay it? Its surprisin' why one of my inttellect ever choosed you for a father.

Willis

(to Doctor) If you doubt our honesty we'll pay the bill and secure another physician.

Doctor

Tut, tut! (crosses L to -ben)

Eben

(blusteringly to Willis) You can't get no other pill peddler cause there aint none in forty miles of here. (comedy laugh) Paw, and me's got a monoply on the pill business and folks in t is neighborhood has got to doctor with us or they don't doctor at all.

Hilda

(to Eben) Good scheme you work. (all look at her) You talk and be such a beeg fool. (others look at Eben who shows surprise) Makes people very sick. (one hand on head and other on stomach) Doctor Quack (Dr. shows slight indignation at abbreviation of his name) Come along and charge beeg moneys to make well. 'laggh gaily others smile)

Doctor

(to Hilda) Young lady, i wish you wouldn't abbreviate my na,e. It's Quackenbush. Accent on the bush and verysoft on the quack.

Hilda

(as if sorry O)) I fremember good next time.

Doctr

I hope you do

Hilda

I think before I speak.

Eben

If you do you will have to make signs. (Doctor slaps Eben on head,

Holda

Then I say very grand, how do you do Doctor. (Dr shows pleasure as she bows) Quack in the bush. (laughs gaily and rush to door L U and exit, Dr shows indignation, Eben covers mouth with hand is laughing Willis smiles, Mrs Hughes displeased)

Eben

(slight pause, tries to control laughter) Now she thinks thinks you a e a duck. (slaps knee and laughs, Flapjack Knocks on D in flat)

Mrs Hughes

(to Willis) See who it is Willis. (Willis goes to flat D in opens door)

Willis

'surprised) turns to others) It is old Flapjack (to Flapjack), Come in. (Eben rises and goes to organ Flapjack enters D F) We thou ht you were up in the woods. (X to Window)

Flapjack

(down R) I come back for business. (places gun on table)

Doctor

I'll bet you got hungry and came back for some of the widow's flapjacks.

Flapjack

(smiles in pleased manner) Now maybe that was it, seein' I aint et none ggin' on six weeks. crosses L and places gun over fire place)

Eben

How's the rabbit crop?

Flapjack

Big. Goin' to be a hard winter, cuase fur on vermin is gettin' thick already.

Mrs Hughes

That means money for you, Flapjack.

Flapjack

(placing cap on mantle) I reckon it does, trappin' will be good and I figger on drawin' more pelts than ever before.

Mrs Hughes

I want a good mink pelt for my winter coat.

Flapjack

(pleased) I got him picked out. Been watchin him for the last three weeks and I says to myself I, that old varmints hide is going to cover Widow Hughes back this winter. (takes bundles wrapped in newspaper from game bag) Brought you a small slab of bar meat. (lays package on table)

Eben

(quickly down to Flapjack R of table, opens medicine case and takes small vial) Swap ye a bottle of pills for it. (all look at him in disgust) I know they are good cause I made them myself. (looks at bottle) Guaranteed to cure anything from bunions to bad conscience.

Dr

Eben, if you don't shut up, they'll think the father that raised you didn't know anything.

Eben

Gosh pa, they know that already. (Dr makes start for him, Eben backs away)

Dr

I'm ashamed of you.

Eben

Its mootial. (Dave knocks on door in flat Flapjack down R Eben goes ton door)

Mrs Hughes

It seems like the whole neighborhood is calling tonight.

Eben

(opening door show surprise) Show all hemlocks if it aint Dave. (

(Willis shows slight nervousness, Dr and Flapjack exchange glances and then look at Mrs. Hughes)

Mrs Hughes

What does he want? (rises with effort)

Dave

(in doorway) Just wnt to come in a while mother. It has been more than two months since I have seen you and I couldn't stay away no longer.

Mrs Hughes

Don't keep the door open, the night air is chilly.

Dave

(drops eyes a moment) Want me to shut it from the outside or inside.

Mrs Hughes

Oh, come in. (Willis turns from them and frowns slightly)

Dave

(pleasantly as he comes down R) Hello, Willis. (Willis bows coldly)

(Eben shuts door and comes down R Dave crosses to Dr and Flapjack)

How do you do Dr. (shakes hand with Dr and Flapjack)

Dr

I'm---

Eben

(quickly) He is comin' along first rate now. I am having kind of tough job raisin him right but I reckon I'll make it if the strap oil holds out an the world don't come to an end. (Flapjack slaps him on shoulder)

Dave

(crosses to Mrs Hughes) And you mother. (places arm about her)

Mrs Hughes

I am as well as can be expected considering the trouble I've had to bear.

(draws away from him he twists hat nervously)

Dave

You---you still think I am guilty of stealing your money. (lays hat on table)

Mrs Hughes

I have no proff of your innocence. (crosses R sits L to Willis)
But we will not talk of that now. Do you intend staying here for the night?

Dave

Why I---I'd like to if you will let me

Mrs Hughes

Willis tell Hilda to cook some of the meat for Dave. (Willis crosses to table and picks up package and exits L 3)

Eben

Me too.

Dr

Eben, don't make me lose patience with you

Eben

Gosh, I hope not cause if ye do ye won't have no virtues at all.

(Dr starts to him, he backs away, Flapjack detains Dr Eben crosses to Dave) Bet ye didn't come out of the woods jest to see your ma.

Dave

Who esle?

Eben

(digging him in the ribs) Git out, cain't fool me cause I know ye are sweet on Doris. (Mrs Hughes shows irritation)

Dave

Has Doris came back?

Dr

She came back from college a couple of weeks ago.

Dave

(crosses to Mrs Hughes) Where

Where is she?

Mrs Hughes

In the dining room

Dave

Excuse me while I clean up (X quickly to D R 1)

Eben

(to Mrs Hughes) Got any pie lying around getting rusty ye aint got no use for?

Mrs Hughes

Plenty Eben. (sits right of table)

Eben

(to all imitating Dave) Excuse me while I fill up (exits quickly R 3)

Dr

I will have to watch that boy or he will founder himself. (Goes R C)

Flapjack

(to Dr) I'll be along pretty soon to watch you. (X L of table)

Mrs Hughes

You are all welcome to whatever I have

Dr

That is right kind of you, widow, and I'll knock off ten cents off'n my bill just to show you I'm as generous as yourself. (exits R 3)

Mrs Hughes

Now, Flapjack, what is your business?

Flapjack

I want to trap on your farm this season. (X to Mrs H Willis enters R 3 and comes down back of table) What's it wuth?

Mrs Hughes

Same as before, one hundred dollars and ten per cent of the profits.

Flapjack

That's reasonable like.

Willis

(X up C) Too much so I fancy. (both turn to him) It ought to be worth more since you say the season is going to be a good one.

Flapjack

(to Willis) The aint no use tryin' to skin me cause I'm too old and tough I know what's reasonable and what aint, so does the widow. You aint in this deal. (Willis crosses to dresser, he turns to Mrs Hughes and takes out leather bag from pocket) You know I am square widow and ye'll get your share of the profits.

Mrs Hughes

I'm satisfied.

Flapjack

(takes out roll of bills from money bag and counts out five) There is five twentys. (hands money to her)

Mrs Hughes

(takes keys from pocket) Bring me the box Willis. (Willis crosses to bureau R U gets box and comes down back of table, Willis takes key s from her and unlocks box, Mrs Hughes places money in box) Now lock it securely. (Willis does so and gives her the keys) For I don't want it to be a further temptation to Dave. (tries box and finds it locked rises and starts R 3) Flapjack you will want a bite to eat before you go.

Flapjack

(X to R 3 assiting Mrs Hughes to D L U) And I want to see my Hilda too. (both exit R 3) (Willis goes cautiously down R 3 and peers in, then up stage and glances L then down to table, takes keys from pocket and unlocks box, Hilda appears D L U as Willis takes money from box)

Hilda

(coming down C) What you do?

Willis

(placing money in pocket) Spying again, eh?

Hilda

(indicating money in his hand) You steal some more.

Willis

Not stealing just borrowing for a few days.

Hilda

Put heem back, you get place in jail.

Willis

Not if you keep your mouth shut.

Hilda

Please, you be in jail I never see you any more, I weep and cry out my heart.

Willis

There is no danger Hilda, if mother discires it is gone, she will blame Dave.

Hilda

It ees wrong.

Wil His

I'll make it right some day. Now be a good girl and say nothing. If you tell anyone I will be arrested and never see you again and then I won't be able to make you my wife.

Hilda

Oh it ees bad---wicked, promise me you will put heem back some day.

Willis

I promise.

Hilda

And ou tell your mother that Dave is a good man.

Willis

Then---y s, yes. (picks up box and goes to bureau)

Hilda

Then I be happy when I know you do what is right. (Willis comes back to table, leaves keys in box Hilda crosses to R D and knocks, Wills shows slight alarm)

Dave

(off R) Hello,

Hilda

(calling at door) Your supper ees cook. (Dave enters D R arranging tie)

Dave

(to Hilda) I don't want supper till I see Doris (Hilda shows surprise Willis slightly angered)

Hilda

(glances at Willis and then to Dave) You like Doris, Doris like you?

Dave

Well, I reckon.

Hilda

I call her quæk. (exits hurriedly D R U Wil is D R)

Dave

Mother is kinda bitter against me, Willis.

Willis

Yes.

Dave

You are not acting too brotherly.

Willis

Live right and be honorable and we can respect you, otherwise even family ties must be broken.

Dave

There was something mysterious about that disappearance of that money. (Willis turns away, Dave watches him) I'm innocent.

Willis

(turning to him) I wish you could prove it.

Dave

Has she missed any since I Have been gone?

Willis

Not a cent.

Dave

Do you reckon she would take a present from me?

Willis

I hardly think so. What kind of a present.

Dave

A hundred dollars. (Willis starts guiltily. Dave crosses to him and lays hand on shoulder) I drawed two months pay before leavin' the camp cause I thought she might need it.

Willis

She has been running a little short.

Dave

Cost a heap to make people smart don't it.

Willis

Yes.

Dave

We'll send you through college and make a fine preacher out of you if I have to work my fingers off.

Willis

(dropping eyes) It ---it is kind of you to take such an interest in me.

Dave

Aint we brothers?

Willis

Only half brothers.

Dave

(smiling) A half a loaf is better than no loaf and I reckon it is the same with brothers. (turns to Willis around with both hands on his shoulder looking proudly at him) I am proud of ye Willis. (Willis glances at him and drops eyes) And it does mean a heap o' good to help ye. Ye are going to be a credit to mother aint ye?

Willis

I'll try.

Dave

Ye will make her so proud of ye she'll forget about having---a son like me that she thinks is no count.

Willis

I don't want her to forget you.

Dave

It won't be hard for her to do it, and well it don't matter 'bout me. (earnestly) I want ye to be a grand preacher, she has set her heart on it and if ye are it'll make her happy an' that means more to me than she knows.

Willis

I'm studying hard.

Dave

And ye'll succeed. Now I aint going to ask mother to take that hundred.

Willis

(shows surprise) I'm sure that she needs it.

Dave

It would hurt my feelings to have her refuse, so I am going to jist slip in her cash box. (Willis shows pleasure) And after I'm gone back to the woods you can tell her it is there.

Willis

And I think that is the best way.

Dave

And when ye get to preachin' to folks about their sins, ye'll some time think of ignorant Dave, won't yet?

Willis

I will never forget what you have done for me. (Dave pats him affectionately)

and turns away) Dave, there is something else I think I should speak about

Dave

Spit her right out.

Willis

't is about Doris.

Dave

What do you mean?

Willis

You love her?

Dave

Well, I---I yes I do.

Willis

And want to marry her.

Dave

'f she is as willing now as she was four years ago.

Willis

Even if she is don't you know tht it is your Christian duty to give her up

Dave

Waht for?

Willis

Well---I---I---can't you realize the shame upon your name. (Dave looks at him in Amazement) It wouldn't be right to ask her to share it since every one in the village knows you are suspected of theft.

Dave

I hadn't thought o' that.

Willis

Her firnds will shun her and her life will be a tortume if she marries you.

Dave

But I have done promised her.

Willis

It is your duty to break the engagment. You know, Dave, you haven't any right to make her suffer for what people think you have done. You don't want people to scorn her do you?

Dave

I'd like to catch somebody a doin' it I'd twist his---D

Willis

(holding hand up as if shocked) Ehh! Can't you see how it is.

Dave

(thinking) No I can't Reckon I aint go brains enough. Maybe you are right though. Maybe I orter to give her up. (leans back and sits on table)

Willis

I advise it Dave, because I know you don't want to make her life a curse.

Dave

(brushes hand across face) I don't reckon she will want me anyhow since I am suspected. (X to chair and sits)

Willis

I think she does, but you show your strength of character by refusing.

Dave

Seems like I have got to give up everything I love, and it aint no fault of mine.

Willis

If an injustice is done to you in this wo ld, yuur reward will come in the next.

Dave

(angrily to him) Oh damn the reward that I have got to wait for till I die. (Willis pretends to be shocked) 'ts a little joy and sunshine in tis world I'm wantin' All my life I have given way to you. I've begged a mother's love and got a kick. I aint even welcome to life

so fur's my own blood is concerned. But Doris is mine, she is the only living being that ever cared for me and I won't give her up. Right or wrong I am going to have her, I am going to take her in these tw arms cause she is mine and God help the man as slurs her fer being Dave's wife. (turns away)

Willis

If that is the way you feel about it, I won't say a y more (X to Dave) I was only saying what I thought was best for both of you.

Dave

(turning to Willis) I know ye was abby and I am sorry I busted out sorta mad like. (places hand on Willis's shoulder) I won't do it no more.

Willis

You had better put the money in the box while you have the chance.

(X to R C window)

Dave

Reckon I had. (starts to bureau R U Doris enters D R 3)

Doris

Dave!

Dave

'turning quickly to her) Doris! (Willis shows displeasure, Doris clasps Dave's hands) Well, well you are a regular lady.

Doris

I hope so. (X to chair)

Dave

'proudly to Willis) Aint she a dandy?

Willis

She is indeed.

Eben

(enters D E 3) Say, Eben, your maw wants you. (Willis exits D R 3)
†Eben comes down back of table)

Dave

(taking Doris L to settee) Come tell me all about yourself. (Doris sits on settee, Dave turns to Eben and motions him out, places stick of wood on fire, then comes down R as if not understanding Dave. Dave repeats business, Eben shakes his head, no, Dave crosses to him and speaks aside) "it out.

Eben

Git out?

Dave

Yes, git out.

Eben

I'll get out if you give me a nickle.

Dave

Here is a quarter.

Eben

Gosh, you are generous I will send Paw in

Dave

If you do, I'll poke out his eye.

Eben

That don't ma e no difference; he has seen all there is in life worth seeing. (exit)

Dave

You have grown so fane that I am almost afraid to touch you.

Do is

Are you scared I will break.

Dave

Maybe not so bad as that, but I reckon I wo ld jar you a little.

Doris

You used to feel free with me before I went away.

Dave

I reckon things are different now.

Doris

You mean on account of the things they say about you

Dave

Yes.

Doris

That doesn't make any difference

Dave

You don't believe it?

Doris

And I won't till I have positive proof of it.

Dave

Hooray. (kisses her quickly, then steps back as if ashamed) I hope ye aint mad?

Doris

Yes I am.

Dave

I ----I am awfully sorry, but I jist co ldn't help it.

Doris

Don't bite at me again. (Dave looks at her in astonishment) When you want to kiss me take me in your arms and do it right.

Dave

Ye won't object?

Doris

I will to a stingy old kiss like that.

Dave

I'll do better after I get in practice. I reckon kissin' is like medicine.

Doris

How so?

Dave

Taint no good, lessn' it hits the right spot. Did you have a good time in school.

Doris

Dandy.

Dave

Meet lots of nice folks.

Doris

Hundreds of them

Dave

Go to parties and dances.

Doris

At least one a week.

Dave

Must seem like a grave yard up here after all that.

Doris

It is a little tame.

Dave

Would you rather live in th city and among fine folks?

Doris

Yes I believe I would.

Dave

We----we've been engaged for a long time, aint we?

Doris

About twelve years.

Dave

And we would have been married if ye hadn't gone away (X to table)

Doris

Yes.

Dave

(X C) I've been thinking Doris and I---, reckon it is best for you and me to forget our pomises.

Doris

You mean to---break our engagment?

Dave

Yes (aaight pause) Willis, told me it wouldn't be right to marry you and I guess it won't.

Doris

So Willis is interested in the matter.

Dave

(as if to shield Willis from blame) Oh he is smart and knows right from wrong.

Doris

You are willing to give me up from your own free will.

Dave

Yes, ^ aint fit for a girl like you. (Doris drops eyes) You got education and money, I aint got nothin' all I can do is to chop wood.

Doris

Why didn't you think of that before I went away

Dave

It was different then. Before ye was like the rest of us in the woods, Now ye are used to fine folks, and manners, I---I only make ye ashamed of me.

Doris

I love city life, Dave, and I like fine people and manners as you say but there is something even better than that.

Dave

(glances at her a moment) Must be locked up in Heaven, then whur ye can't get it.

Doris

No, it is in this world and something that you can give me. (Dave looks at her in surprise) Its happiness, I mean too educate you teach you good manners and make you feel worthy of me. Then we can go out in the world and live among the finest.

Dave

Suppose I try and fail.

Doris

Then I will spend my life in the woods with you. (Dave drops eyes she pats him affectionately on shoulder, slight pause and exits D L U)

Dave

(after Doris exits, raises head, draws long breath) My but she is a dandy girl. (glances around room ,takes five paper bills from old fashioned pocket book and goes to buereau R U Mrs Hughes enters D R 3 crosses to Dave as he is placing money in box Dave does not see her)

Mrs Hughes

(as she gets hear Dave, stops suddenly in surprise sepaks) Dave! (he turns quickly to her, (has money in his hand, the box is open) You thief! Caught at last! (X L C)

Dave

(stepping toward her) Mother, I---

Mrs Hughes

(in rage) Don't speak to me. (calls off L) Willis, Dr. Doris Come quick. (Willis enters excitedly followed by Dr Flapjack, Doris Willis crosses quickly to Mrs Hughes)

Willis

What is the matter?

Dr

What has happened? (X C Doris below door Eben F

lap ja_c

and Hilda enter L D U)

Mrs Hughes

The theif I caught him

Dave

It aint so, it aint . (Crosses to table Doris down L C Hilda down L Ben down L Flapjack C and back of table, Dr down R and a little back of Mrs Hughes R 1) Doris I swear it aint.

Mrs Hughes

Willis, the box, the box. (indicates bureau drawer)

Willis

(X to box) Why the box is here but the money is gone. ('turns and sees money in Dave' shand, Willis quickly gets cash box and comes down L of Mrs Hughes) Its there in your hands. (Dave falls back a little as if dazed)

Mrs Hughes

(to all) Flapjack paid me one hundred dollars for trapping rights He and Willis saw me put the money in the box and lock it.

Dr

I swar it is so. (Doris sinks in chair left of table and buries head in hands)

Dave

Thensomeone else is a thief. for this money belongs to me.

Its one hundred dollars, a present I meant for mothers, Willis knows it. (all look at Willis who shows astonishemtn) I was slippin' it in the box for her, wasn't I Willis? Tell 'em I aint a thief. Tell 'em how it is.

Willis

(to Dave) If I could save you honorably I would do it, but I won't lie for you. (Dave looks at him in wonderment. Willis speaks to others) Even though he is my brother, I must condemn him.

Mrs Hughes

Speak, Willis, tell what you know.

Willis

He told me not ten minutes ago that he needed money. (Dave looks at him in dazed manner) He wanted to borrow some. Would he have done it if he had one hundred dollars?

Flapjack

No.

Dr

Not likely.

Dave

(in rage to Willis) Ye lyin' hypocrite. (starts to strike him Dr prevents it, Willis steps quickly R and places Mrs Hughes between them)

Mrs Hughes

(in franny) Take yourself from this house, Dave Furguson, and never darken my doors again. You are not fit to live among honest people and here before all I disown you as a son and you are the same as dead to me. Go! (Indicates D L U Dave picks up hat, and goes slowly to D in flat. Hilda turns and gazes into fire place. Doris weeping at table.- Dave- Others watch Dave who turns at door)

Dave

(quietly to Mrs Hughes) Drive me out if you will, I'll keep on lovin' you cause ye are my mother and if ye ever need your no count Dave he will come to you if he has to crawl. (puts on hat, buttons up coat, and exits D in flat. Mrs Hughes drops in chair. Willis affectionately consoling her, curtain falls as Dave passes window)

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

(Tripod with fire, large stirring stick in it down R, front corner. Set stump C cabin up L with door in it, run way off back right. River drop backing)

(This is to show Flapjack's cabin one week later from first act. Time about dusk, Flapjack discovered on stump stretching p'nts on board. Hilda discovered on runway looking off, after curtain is up Flapjack sniffs air glances at tripod and then at Hilda)

Flapjack

Hilda, ye are lettin' this verminits grease burn up. (resumes work Hilda continues looking off L as if not having heard him, slight pause he looks around as if expecting to see her, shows surprise and impatience) Hilda.

Hilda

(comes down) Queek I come.

Flap

Stir this varmintis fat or it won't be with perservin'

Hilda

(Cross to tripod and stir contents) I do heem fine good.

Flap

what's ailin' you the last couple of days?

Hilda

(glances nervously at him, he doesn't look up) I---I am head seek.
(places hand on head)

Flap

What's the cause?

Hilda

I----I---think too hard.

Flap

What about?

Hilda

About---about nothin'

Flap

Well, if you ave spent a couple of days jist thinkin' about nothing' taint no wonder yer sick in the head. (picks out small stick from several that are lying R of stump, business with stick of measuring them to fit p'nts) I kinda lowed maybe ye was thinkin' of something else. (X. L.)

Hilda

What you think I think?

Flap

My suspicious is its about Dave Furguson. (Hilda glances at him catches he glances, and speaks dedidely) I know it. Yer looks give ye away. Ever since thw eidow caught him stealin' her money ye been acting queer like, and I have ketched y lookin' toward the widows house longing like. What is twixt you and Dave that makes your head hurt like thinkin?

Hilda

I cannot say heem yet. (Flap. looks at her in surprise) Some day maybe.

Flap

(repeats bus with sticks and fastens out other end of pelt in same manner) He aint fit for a girl like you to be thinkin' on.

Hilda

Heem not so bad as people think.

Flap

He is a low down theif and I aint goin' to have you a thinkin' of him cause it might turn to love.

Hilda

I not say I love ~~heem~~.

Flap

Her are thinkin' of him and that is the first sign.

Hilda

Sometimes signs lie maybe.

Flap

I'm hopin it is this tie cause I aint wanting to see no harm come to you. (places board against wood wing and crosses C) And it sure will i ye love a man as aint honest. (holds out arms to her she comes to him, shows great affection) Trust yer old dady child. Tell him whats troublin' you. (Willis enters on run, stops on seeing Flap. and Hilda)

Hilda

Beeg secret I have for Dave. (Willis shows alarm) But I cannot tell yo, soon maybe I telle everybody.

Flap

(patting her on the shoulder) Yer all I got Hilda and I would like to share every sorrow with you, but if ye aint ready to tell me I reckon I kin wait.

Hilda

(nestles in his arms) You very good father.

Flap

But rememeber this, if any man tries to fool ye jist cause ye are innocent and trustin' tell me and I will fill his carcass so full of lead they will have to get a derrick to lift him off the ground.

Hilda

I promise you I will tell you if any man make beeg grand loves to me , and then break my heart with lies.

Flap

Ye had best run in the house now and pack by game back so I kin be headin' fer the north

Hilda

Tonight you go away?

Flap

I must. (Hilda glances around timidly) If ye get skeered of stayin' here alone jist trapze up the widow's till I get back.

Hilda

Somre more flapjacs I must cook for your supper before you go. (starts to cabin)

Flap

(catching her) No ye don't. the last es ye made was so all fired tough I busted my ~~tee~~ best fr nt tooth trying to make a dent in them.

Hilda

I cook heem good like Mrs. Hughes when I try. (Flap looks surprised) I cook heem tough because ye scold me for burning grease last time.

Flap

(surprised) Ye did. (Hilda nods head yes) I hereby promise faithfully I will never scold again. The revenge ye take is terrible.

Hilda

I pack you things queek. (exit in house, Willis comes down runway)

Willis

Hello, Flapjack. (L C)

Flap.

(X to tripod turning to him) Evenin' (down to kettle and stirs contents) Your ju t the feller I want to see. (motions Willis to sit

Willis

(sitting at stump L of tripod) What for?

Flap

(going to R of tripod) About that brother of yours. D' e know if he has been making love to my gal Hilda.

Willis

Well----I----I can't say for sure but I think he has.

Flap

(places foot onstump) It don't suit me to have her kinda likin' a wuthless feller like he is.

Willis

Can't you stop it?

Flap.

I aint got the education to pint out sins like you have, and I've just been thinkin' o' askin' you to kinda join hands with yer mother and talk to Hilda about it.

Willis

She wo ld resent our inteference.

Flap.

Not if I tell her it is my wish for her to listen. You and and yer mother co ld help a heap moren' me cause I don't know jist how's best to go about it.

Willis

The trouble is you have allowed her too much freedom and only commence talking to her when it is too late.

Flap

I reckon ye are right.

Willis

If she were under our care we might be able to convince her of Dave's unworthiness, but---

Flap.

Sposin' I tell her that I am placin' her in the keepin' of you an your mother? (Willis shows pleasure) Spose I tell her to do what ye tell her to cuase it is for her happiness.

Willis

The very thing.

Flap

If Dave was honest like you, I wouldn't say a word cause I don't think any woman is sure enough happy till she has got a husband, to boss around, but some husbands is more desirable than others.

Willis

You had better have a talk with Hilda dnd tell her you want her to follow my advice.

Flap

I'll do it. (starts to house, turns to Willis) I'm placin' h r in keepin' of you and your mother. (cause I'm trustin' ye don't let no harm come to her. (exit in cabin)

Willis

(glances around and sees that he is alone, take s letter from pocket) Here are two sheets of paper, he reads from one) "Dear Willis, your letter recieved. So you are having trouble with Hilda dnd want me to get rid of her for you. Send her to me and I will soon put her where she won't bother you again for there are men here who make a busines of picking up young girls and nobody will ever be able to find her. The enclosed letter you will find addressed to Dave and puts the blame on himWhen you land Doris and the fortune don't forget yours truly George. (Willis glances at letter a moment and burns it with envelope in fire. Looks at other in musing manner burns upper right hand corner of it slightly extinguishes flame, Hilda enters from cabin)

Hilda

(*door in frnt of triped joyfully) Willis! (Willis quickly conceals letter) You come. (down quickly L of him kneels) So long---wait to see you/

Willis

I have been busy and couldn't come any sooner. (sits)

Hilda

Father he say I must do all you tell me.

"ill s

And you will

Hilda

So much it give me to be what he call boss by you.

Willis

(glancing toward cabin) If you promise to do everything I tell you and not say a word to anyone, in three dyas you will be my wife.

Hilda

Oh so good it make me feel. No head seekness I have now. All gay and happy, I promise twice queek.

Willis

Would you like to go away to a big city?

Hilda

Where?

Willis

Chicago down in the states.

Hilda

Yes.

Willis

(glances around toward cabin) You must go tonight. (hilda shows great surprise) I've told your father that I want to marry you and it pleases him.

Hilda

That makes me feel hap y

Willis

Snd since mother would object we must be married without her knowledge.

Hilda

We run away?

Willis

Only for a few days.

Hilda

Together we go?

Willis

No, you must go alone.

Hilda

(draws back amazed) Alone. (winds arouns about his neck) No, no in beeg town I be afraid.

Willis

There is no danger for you. Do you remember George Backus who used to live here?

Hilda

Yes.

Willis

He lives in C icago now and has a big fine house where he will take care of you till we are married.

Hilda

When you come?

Willis

In the morning. I've told mother that I am going to Chicago on a vist.

Hilda

Why not we go together

Willis

Because that would spoil everything. She would suspect something and refuse to let me go. I just got a letter today from George and he will meet you at the station.

Hilda

Maybe father heem not like it.

Willis

He knows we love each other and it will be a surprise for h,

when he comes back from the north and finds it out didn't he tell you
to do all I say?

Hilda

Yes, heem say I must, when we come back?

Willis

Next week. (earnestly) You'll do it for me won't you, Hilda?

Hilda

(slight pause) My love so beeg, so grand, I do anything for you.

Willis

(pleased) You are noble girl, Hilda

Hilda

But you promise not to forget to come?

Willis

(assuringly) Rest assured I'll follow on the first train. (rises and assist her to rise) Pack your grip and we will start for the station as soon as your father leaves and re ember on must not tell a living soul where you are going.

Hilda

I be still as mice. (starts to cabin when Eben speaks off)

Eben

(off L U excitedly) Flapjack Ho. (Willis and Hilda go down stage)
Ho Hildy. (enters running showing excitement)

Willis

What's the matter?

Ebeen

(running up and down excitedly) Ses sen paw (down L C Willis and Hilda R)

Willis

No.

Eben

G---got to find him. (looks behind board at rock L 2 crosses quickly to k ttle and looks in Willis and Hilda look at him in amazement)

Willis

Who's sick?

Eben

Nobody. (sees board at house and looks behind it)

Hilda

Who's dead?

Eben

Nobdy.

Willis

Then what in the world are you so excited about?

Eben

Dori's dad done gone clean crazt

Willis

What?

Hilda

How do you know?

Eben

Seen him,

Willis

What did he do to make ou think he was crazy?

Eben

(quietly) Paid me a dollar he's owed paw for the past five years.

(Willis and Hilda show disgust Willis X dwn L to stump hilda at kettle)

Hilda

(to Eben) You so crazy you give me beeg disgust in head. (starts to stir contents of kettle Willis looking off L)

Eben

(glances at Willis, speaks aside to Hilda and at same time slips R arm about her) Kissin's a powerful good linement (smiles at her)(she looks at him a moment) Fer disgustedness.

Hilda

Just one beeg kiss I give you. (he shows delight, wipes lips with sleeve of left arm, she takes stick from kettle and glances down at hand) Not. (press stick against his hand that is about waist just as he is about to kiss her)

Willis

What's the matter? (Hilda resumes stirring)

Eben

I' am ruint.

Hilda

I kees (Eben looks at her in alarm) "ake heem well (starts to him

Eben

(backing away) Kee, off. (Hilda stops) Come night me again and I will sen fer the fire department (Flapjack enters from house Eben X D L)

Flapjack

(at door impatenteintly) Cilda gal (all turn to him) Aint you never going to finish my packing?

Hilda

I go now. (exit quickly in cabin R of tripod Flap comes down to kettle and takes stick stirs for a moment)

Doctor

(off L) Careful widow. 'other turn and look toward L U)

Willis

(looks L 2 surprised) 'other I wonder whatshe wants (Doctor and Mrs Hughes and Doris enter from L U Doris and Dr are assiting Mrs Hughes)

-Willis- Der

Step hight Mrs Hughes there is a big stone there, 'come down Mrs H C Dr L of her Doris R)

Willis

(going up to Mrs Hughes) 'other you shouldn't be out in the chilly night air.

Dpotor

(turns to him) Don t countermand my orders.

Mrs Hughes

(as Doris leads her down to stump L) Te-Der- The doctor says it will do me good.

Eben

Faw oreter know cause he has studied monotony (Willis X up C)

Flap

'er welcome widow Glad to have you come to see me. (Doris goes Up stage, Willis joins her)

Eben

Gosh. (all turn to him) There will be something doin' around here the first thing we know.

Mrs Hughes

What do you mean, Eben

Eben

'shaking head seriously) I am skeered they'll be bloodshed.

Flap

Why?

Dr

Whose?

Eben

(to Dr) Twixt you and Flapjack. (all show disgust and surprise) You go to see the widow and she goes to see him (to Mrs Hughes) Which are ye going to marry, widow?

Dr

"e heathen. (raises hand as if to slap him, he runs back of stump)
I hate to think that I am your father.

Eben

Don't 'pologize for I am asheamed of it as you are.

Mrs Hughes

(to Flapjack) We came over to get some bear grease. (Eben motions Dr to come to him, he does)

Flap

How much?

Mrs Hughes

A couple of pounds. (Eben whispers in Dr's ear)

Flap

New or old?

Mrs Hughes

New.

Doctor

(showing great surprise) "e did, when?

Eben

About an hour ago.

Dr

Whur's the dollar?

Eben

Threwed it down the old well. (Dr shows surprise) and then filled up the well with dirt.

Dr

Ye fool, what did you do that for?

Eben

Doggone it didn't you tell me to plant the first dollar I got as deep as I could. (Dr shwos disgust) so it would groow. Couldn't find nothin' deeper than the well.

Dr

I suppose if I told you to kill yourself with poison ye'd do it.

Eben

No, I'd get the stomach-ache and have you doctor me, I' d suffer more but die quicker.

Doris

(coming down R of Mrs Hughes speaks to Dr) Eben doesn't seem to have much faith in you, Dr.

Dr

He has mighty nigh ruined my business.

Mrs Hughes

~~isshlechleibeh~~ I suspect Eben of being at the bottom of the trick the undertakers playing on the Doctor. (Doris turns to Eben who is showing fear)

Doris

What trick?

Mrs Hughes

Every one of the Doctor's patients have recieived a price list on coffins.

Doris

Did you do that?

Eben

No ma'am, I wouldn't do such a thing.

Mrs Hughes

And today I recieived a bargain list on tombstones, with all kinds of epitaphs.

Dr

That is going too far, I'll lick the man that sent it (races up and down stage)

Mrs Hughes

It wasn't the tombstones man's fault. Whip the one who recommended
meas a prospective customer. (Dr down E)

Dr

Who is he?

Mrs Hughes

Your son.

Even

Tmaštñet neither.

Dr

I'll likk ye any how. (sees stick R of stump starts after Eben with it runs into cabin)

Eben

(quækly crosses to cabin) A-tchin' afore hanging. (quickly exit into cabin, Dr reaches door just as Eben closes it in his face)

Dr

(jumping back as if hurt) Uuch. (feels nose)

Doris

Are you hurt? (Dr tries to get in cabin Eben holds door)

Mrs Hughes

Restrain yourself Dr.

Dr

If I saty in myself it will be in good cause (angrily bursts into cabin)

Eben

(in house) Uuch murder, help!

Mrs Hughes

I'll have to caution the Dr about being too harsh. (exits into cabin)

Eben

(loudly in house) Quit Mrs Hughes closes door of cabin Doris starts to house, Willis comes down and intercepts her)

Willis

I want to talk to you alone.

Doris

What about?

Willis

Dave.

Doris

Well?

Willis

You still believe in his innocence?

Doris

(down L of tripod) You know that I do.

Willis

(L C) Despite the fact that you saw the evidence of his guilt?

Doris

That wasn't at all convincing to me. (Willis shows surprise) He appealed to you for the truth.

Willis

And I spoke it.

Doris

You spoke falsely, I know it. He wouldn't have made such an appeal without a reason and no matter what the others may think of him, I love him and trust him and will continue to do so until I think I have positive proff that he is guilty.

Willis

He isn't worthy of such trust as yours and I must do my duty by you and another poor misguided girl.

Doris

Another girl who do you mean?

Willis

Hilda.

Doris

What of her?

Willis

She loves him and he would have married her had you not returned.

Doris

I don't believe it.

Willis

Wait and see, you don't know everything that has been going on here during your four years absence. (Doris turns thoughtfully to tripod) If I should tell Flapjack all I know, he'd shoot Dave on sight.

Doris

(turning to him) By telling me that do you hope to turn me against, Dave?

Willis

I mean to try and save you from taking a step you will regret. I mean to do all in my power to right the wrong that has been done to an innocent girl.

Doris

Your proofs of these wrongs.

Willis

Hilda's confession to me of the promises Dave made her and her pleading that I do all in my power to see justice done her.

Doris

You maybe telling the truth.

Willis

I am.

Doris

Againing you may not.

Willis

If it is proved to you that Dave is false will you still continue a blind faith in him?

Doris

No, but I must have more than your unsuppo rted word for such an accusation and I mean to get it.

Willis

How?

Doris

Hilda is there, I am going to ask her if you speak the truth? (starts to cabin, Willis shows alarm steps quickly toward her)

Willis

You must not.

Doris

Are you afraid to face her?

Willis

I'll meet her fearlessly but not here and now.

Doris

Why not?

Willis

Her father is there.

Doris

Well?

Willis

He suspicions Dave and swears to kill him if he has been fooling Hilda To arouse him now would mean murder. (Doris shrinks back from cabin) Wait till tomorrow. (passes Doris down L of tripod) Flapjack is going away tonight and you will have a chance to satisfy yourself without exposing Dave to certain death.

Doris

(sinking on stump) I can't believe it of him. (buries head in hands)

Willis

There is only one honorable thing for him to do and that is to keep

his promise and make her his wife.
Drosi

She can't have him, he belongs to me.

Willis

You must give him up. Would you marry a man who is guilty of attempting to place a girl in a position where her life will be a disgrace to herself? And friends, here read this.

Doris

"What do you mean?"

Willis

I have positive knowledge that he intends to entice the girl away, and into a life of shame.

Doris

Impossible, he wouldn't dare do such a thing.

Willis

'Read this. (hands her letter) (she glances over it, shows horror at thought of it)

Doris

Who is George?

Willis

I don't know.

Doris

Where does he mean to send her?

Willis

I don't even know that since the place of writing is not here.

Doris

How---how did you get this (hands it back to him)

Willis

I went to the saw mill today to try and induce Dave to do right by

Hilda he was gone but I found this among a lot of letters that he had burned off.

Doris

What do you propose doing?

Willis

I have spoken to Hilda and secured her promise not to leave the village under any circumstances and before Flappjack returns I hope to have everything arranged with the least unpleasantness for all concerned.

Doris

(burying face in hands,) Dave, Dave!

Willis

(pretends sympathy) I'm sorry Doris that I have had to tell you this but justice must be done. You have been deceived in him the same manner as Hilda and I thought it better you should learn the truth before it was too late.

Doris

Have you told your mother?

Willis

No, she has suffered through him without adding more. (Eben appears in door of cabin)

Eben

Willis your maw wants you.

Willis

I'll come at once. (Eben disappears in cabin, Willis turns to Doris who has face buried in hands) I wouldn't grieve much about him Doris. Smile and exit in cabin. Dave enters slowly from L U and comes down, glances at cabin and comes down to tripod.)

Dave

(as surprised at seeing Doris) Doris, what are you doing here? (Doris

rises quickly when he speaks X L of C he comes ^A of her) Why you are crying, what's wrong. (places hand on shoulder)

Doris

No, no don't touch me.

Dave

Don't touch ye? What have I done to make ye act so cold like?

Doris

Ask yourself what you have done. (Dave shows surprise) Ask yourself if you are worthy of my love.

Dave

Doris, if ye don't marry lessin' ye git a man worthy of ye, ye will live and die an old maid. Cause they don't grow men good enough fer you. Hays they finally made ye believe I'm a no count thief.

Doris

Were you accused of theft alone I could still love you

Dave

Have they found out I'm something worse?

Doris

I've learned that you, the one I loved and trusted are not the honorable man I thought. I now of your duplicity, your vows and promises to another and your despicable plot to entice her into a life of shame and degradation.

Dave

(slight pause looks at her in amazement, smile crosses his face)
Co idn't they find good size murder too accuse me of doing (she looks at him in astonishment and doubt) Idon't want to be slighted when they pass around the plate of crimes.

Doris

Treat it lightly if you will you can't decieve me any longer.

Dave

I believe ye are serious.

Doris

I am.

Dave

(looking at her in wonder) Sure ye aint eat nothin' that has give ye the dypepsy and made yer head unreasonable?

Doris

I've seen the proofs. (Dave show seriousness) I've read the letter you thought to destroy and I know that you want to get Hilda away from here.

Dave

(bewildered) I don't know what ye are talking about, There aint nothin twixt her and me and I aint tried to destroy no letter.

Doris

I saw it, you're flase to even promise you've made her. (goes up stage)

Dave

I aint made no promises.

Doris

She confessed everytghing to Willis, you have amused yourself and played with her affec ions, you have led her to believe you would make her your wife.

Dave

I'll swear I aint never spoke of word of love to her, nor made a promise to her in my life.

Doris

(as she comes down) Then why did you write some friend and tell him you werehaving trouble with Hilda? Why the answer telling you to send her to him so he gould get rid of her for you?

Dave

It is all a pack of lies to come twixt you and me. (in frenzy)

Dave

Lies, lies, I'll prove they are lies. (starts quickly toward cabin)
Doris

(alarmed) Be careful (starts after him he turns to her) Hilda's father is there and has threatened to kill you if he learns that you are deceiving her.

Dave

I aint carin' for his threats, I aint done nobody no wrong and I aint goin' to be done more wrongs. (starts to cabin)

Doris

(clutching him by arm) No, no not now tomorrow.

Dave

Tonight, right here now.

Doris

Put your mother, the doctor Willis---they are all here.

Dave

Then I will drag Willis out here and afore them all I'll choke the lie down his cowardly throat. (starts to cabin)

Doris

(rushes past him and blocks way) You shan't do it.

Dave

I aint going to have ye believin' bad of me and do nothing to set ye right.

Doris

You shan't go in there, you and Flapjack would quarrel and one of you would get killed.

Dave

Killin' us waht some folks deserve. If I get it, I reckon they aint nobody goin' to grieve much

Doris

You have no right to say that, no matter what you have done, no matter how basely you have deceived me, your life is precious to me and I won't let you go to certain death. (lights begin to dim up to him pleadingly) Please go, her father is going awa tonight and you can face her without danger.

Dave

And while I'm waitin' you will be thinkin' of me as a low down skunk.

Doris

I'll try to think the best I can of you---I---I'll try and believe you innocent until proven guilty.

Dave

I reckon if Hilda says that I am guilty you will believe her?

Doris

"hat else can I believe?

Dave

(looks at her steadily) Twixt 'em all, they have got ye a doubtin' and that is what they want. (bitterly) wouldn't a thought if of you. Doris. (she drops eyes) Cuase I spose ye knowed me bettern' anybody.

Doris

You may have changed. (Down L of tripod sits) I---I've been away four years.

Dave

(C) And they was long ones for me. I loved ye and wanted ye so much I coun ed every day cause it brough ye that much nearer to me again. (speaks brokenly) Nobody never seemd to love me 'ceptin' you and my dog, and all the timeye was gone, he and me used to talk about ye'. (Doris bows head in hands) I'd tell him how much I thought of ye. and he would wag his tail kinda pleased like. (slight pause) I hate to tell him ye are like all the rest and aint believin'.

in me no more.

Doris

God knows I want to believe in you, Dave, but everthing is against Y u. The money they say you stole-- Hilda's confession to Willis. Rises agitated manner, turns up stage) The letter---all ---all against you.

Dave

My word aint goin' to count agin all of that.

Doris

(as she comes down) I don't believe you are a thief, I don't want to think you are anything but hono able.

Dave Flapjack

(in house) Come along, Willis.

Doris

(to Dave) Go at once, please. (half turns to him upstage)

Dave

I'll see you tomorrow.

Doris

(agitated) Yes, yes go. (Dave exits quickly up run L Doris stands looking off after him, Flapjack enters from cabin followed by Willis he has gun in hand and full game bag)

Flapjack

(glances off L steps closer to Doris shows surprise) Aint that some body going up the path?

Willis

(glancing L) Looks like Dave.

Flapjack

(about to level gun) I'll fix him. (Doris quickly siezes gun barrel and turns it aside)

Doris

He came to see me.

Flapjack

(angrily trying to take gun away from her grapp) Let go, the varmints a hanging around after my Hilda.

Doris

(keeping between Flapjack and run words down stage, Willis R) Then wa ittill you meet him face to face, don't be a coward and shoot him in the back.

Flapjack

(slight pause looks steadily at her) Ye are right. (Taint old Flapjack's way to be a coward. I'll wait. (Doris releas gun slowly Flapjack turns to Willis) Reckon I'll just put off that there trip of mine. (Willis shows surprise) Cause I don't like the idea of Dave hangin around here at night. (starts to remove gun bag, Doris goes up and glances off L)

Willis

(placing hands on bag Flapjack stops) Have no fear, Flapjack, go on about your business and I will look after him.

Flapjack

I am a fearin' some harm will come to her.

Willis

(reassuringly) I give you my word, I'll see Dave tomorrow.

Flapjack

Ye needn't mind. (Doris comes down L Willis shows surprise) I'll do it myself. I'll just take a look at my bear traps and be back afore noon tomorrow. (exits R I) (Doris and Willis watch him off a moment)

Willis

(turning to her) You see the danger Dave is in.

Doris

Yes, yes.

Willis

He must be warned at a

Doris

He denies having made Hilda any promises.

Willis

Did you expect him to acknowledge it to you?

Do is

I am not convinced that you are telling the truth and won't until I hear it from Hilda herself. (starts for cabin, Willis stops her)

Willis

You won't ask her now?

Doris

Why not?

Willis

Mother is there?

Doris

It doesn't matter, the truth must be known sometime. (Hilda enters from cabin, comes down to tripod)

Hilda

Oh---I forgot grease. (starts to take kettle from tripod Willis does it for her Doris comes down L C)

Willis

(while removing kettle) Hilda, Doris is a girl we can trust, I've told her about it and she wants to know the truth about the matter. (Doris intently watching them)

Hilda

What you talk about?

Doris

I want to--

Willis

She wants to know about the promises that have been made to you about marriage.

Hilda

(quickly and joyfully) Beeg promises, beeg love, grand fine wife I make. (Doris turns aside, covers face and hands, Hilda bends over kettle) I be so happy then I sing all day, dance all night. (stirring contents, speaks to Doris but doesn't look her way) No time I think he love you Doris. (Willis attentively watching both) And so mad I get I break things, but he tell me now (looking lovingly at Willis) It is only me he love---only me he makes heem grand wife. (Doris in front of stump L)

Willis

(glances at Doris and then at Hilda, bends over kettle speaks aside quickly) Into the house now and get ready to leave at once. (carries kettle to cabin for her, Doris sinks on stump buries face in hands)

Hilda

(aside to Willis) I beready to go in two three five minutes. (exit in cabin Willis turns and looks at Doris light from cabin full upon him, comes down L C)

Willis

Are you convinced now?

Doris

(weeping face covered) Dave! Dave! (Mrs Hughes appears in door way of cabin)

Mrs Hughes

Willis my son.

Willis

(going up to her) Here mother. (leads her down C)

Mrs Hughes

I must be going home. Where is Doris?

Willis

(indicating) There.

Mrs Hughes

(crosses to her) Give me your arm, Doris, the men folks are so impateint with an old granny like me. (places hand on Doris shoulder, shows surprise) Why you are shaking like you had a chill. (Doris sobs) And crying, come child what's wrong?

Willis

Why, it---its about Dave mother.

Mrs Hughes

Dave again? Are we never to have any peace from him? What has he done?

Willis

Betrayed her trust, toyed with the affections of Hilda. (Mrs Hughes shows surprise) and proved hi self unworthy of either. We have found him out at last.

Mrs Hughes

Just as I told you child.

Doris

(rising) Take me home, take me home. (buries face on Mrs Hughes shoulder)

Mrs Hughes

You are not going to your own home, child, you are going with me. It is a mother's comforting words you are needing and I will take the place of her that is gone Come along Willis. (starts up stage Eben and Doctor enter from cabin Eben has smalll tin can supposed to contain grease, Doctor has stick)

Willis

(confused) I---I must find Dave.

Mrs Hughes

We are wanting no more of him

Willis

It is a case of life and death. Doris will explain when you get home. (starts R L) (Mrs Hughes consles Doris) (exit R U

Doctor

Any need of my services?

Willis

Not yet. (turns to go)

Eben

That aint the way to the saw mill and that is the where you will find him.

Willis

I am going to cut across. Don't wait up for me mother, I may be pretty late. (exits quickly R L)

Eben

Say Pa.

Dr

Well?

Eben

Is bear grease good swabbin' fer blisters? (tires to feel back of shoulder)

Dr

It is not as effective on some as old fashioned hickory linement. that's applied in chunks. (shows Eben the stick)

Eben

I 'spose yer full aware that ye kinda mussed up my dignity afore all the folks.

Dr

I'll muss ye worse than that if ye don't stop hectoring the life out of me. Remember I am your father.

Eben

Taint my fault ye are. (Doris and Mrs Hughes exit slowly L R run)

Dr

And in this great race of life a child is judged by the quality of its parents.

EBen

surprised) Sure.

Dr

I am. (lights a little dimmer)

Eben

If that is the case ye have me running backwards.

Dr

What do you mean?

Even

Yer too big a hanycap (Dr shows indignation) Course I know ye are trying to live so's ye'll be a credit to me and for that reasohn I'm patient with ye and overlock yer short comin's (places arm about Dr's shoulders and smiles at him) Gimme me a nickle.

Dr

(taking coin from pocket) What for?

Eben

Want to buy a box of tacks. (Dr look at him in amazement) Paw ye kow as we l as me that ye git paid back when ye muss my dignity and some of these nights when ye go to yer downy couch for peaceful slumbers ye will find the down full of carpet tacks.

Dr

(arm about Eben) Now Eben, I am awfully sorry that I hurt your back.

Eben

Doggone twasn't my back as much as my feelings.

Dr

(kindly) Lets arbitrate the matter. It hurts me worse than it did you tp punisn you, but I had to do my duty.

Eben

They aint no use arguing paw, cause ye're goin' to get yer medicine so you might just as well quit talking soft like, it'll hurt me worse than you to punish you, but I must do my duty

Dr

(taking another coin from pocket) Here is a quarter and a nickle You can godown to Moosse Jaw tomorrow and squa der the whole thirty cents and I won't say a word. (aces coin in his hand) You aint mad at your old dad are you?

Eben

You mad at me?

Dr

Not a particle.

Eben

Neither am I lets go home. (places arm about Dr both turn up stage)

Dr

Come widow. (both shos surprise)

Eben

They are gone.

Dr

We must hurry. (starts L U)

ben

(stopping him at foot of run) Say paw (Dr to him) I want to kinda advise you a little about the widow.

Dr

Her eyes?

Eben

No, her heart.

Dr

She never mentioned the weakneess afore.

Eben

Every woman's got a weakness of the heart when a man's concerned. and I been kinda noticin' some longin' glances you been castin'.

Dr

Tut tut, son.

Eben

They aint no use tut tuteen me, keep a glancin paw and some day you will get her.

Dr

You want a step mother.

Eben

I aint so particular about that, but the widows got a lot of land and some mo ey which looks good to me and if Mr Wise as ye claim to be you aint goin' to lose no time a gettin' it.

Dr

I hadn't thought of that.

Eben

Now I will tell you what I will do, I'll guarnatee the widow as being safe and sane and sound.

Dr

Young man, your father is capable of presenting his virtues to the widow himself.

Eben

Ye had better be doing it afore old Flapjack jins her out and leves you ahangin on the gate looking like a busted promise of a politican.

Dr

(glandin off L) Hum---so thing in that--wonder if the widows' getting safely over the rocks?

Eben

Lets go see. (starts up Run with Dr) When ye go to help her over the rocks, jest put yer arm about her kind lovin' like and hang on fer dear life. (both exit L U Willis enters cautiously from R I glances around goes up run and looks off L then comes down to cabin)

Willis

(calling) Hilda.

Hilda

(in house) Hello.

Willis

Are you about ready?

Hilda

(appears in door way she wears hat light cloak and carries old fashioned telescope) You see I do all you say, queek I got all my things packed.

Willis

(glances L) M'ther thinks that I am at the saw mill to see Dave, so she won't think anything unusual in my absence.

Hilda

To Moose Jaw we go.

Willis

Yes, I will take you part way (gives her money) Here is fifty dollars. (Hil a places telescope on ground)

Hilda

(pleased) Ooo h so much money I never have in my whole life.

(places it in waists)

Willis

Buy a ticket to Regina (she looks at him in surprise) There you will have to wait an hour and you canbuy your ticket to Chicago, in that way no one in Moose Jaw will know you have gone to Chicago and no one will follow you.

Hilda

One beeg grand surprise my father have.

Willis

Yes.

Hilda

And your mother (hand on heart) So made she be, her hate me (winds arm about Willis' neck) But I be such a good wife someday maybe her love me like you/

Willis

Of course she will. (picks up telescope) Come we have no time to lose. (places arm about yer and starts L U Dave enters from run and stops suddenly on seeing them they show great alarm Hilda utters slight excitement and steps back toward cabin)

Dave

(comes down while speaking) Yer the folks I am lookin' fer?

Willis

We have no thee to talk.

Dave

Where ye goin' with that. (indicates te escape)

Willis

It is none of your business. (crosses L)

Dave

Then I am makin' it my business, ye have lied to Doris about me (Hilda close to door of cabin) and yer a tryin' to sneak away in the night with an innocent girl.

Willis

I am not, she is going of her own free will.

Dave

(with anger) Neither her nor you is goin' to leave until ye have taken back that lie. (turns to Hilda) In to the house, lock yer windows, and doors if ye'd save yerself from such a snake.

Hilda

No no.

Dave

Yes I say.

Hilda

Heem good keep al promises to me and I go with heem.

Dave

He aint meanin' ye no good.

Hilda

(agitated) (to Willis) I go, I go (starts to X L)

Dave

(catching her by L hand, turning her face to him) Ye have listned till ye have sold yer soul fer one of his smiles. (still holds hand)

Willis

You have no right to interfere with her.

Dave

I am takin' a man's right to save a trustin' girl from the clutches of a man like you and so help me God, she is not goin' to leave this house tonight. (turns with back to audience, indicates for Hilda to go in house, she looks a moment, then at Willis, Dave steps toward cabin leadin her, Willis picks up rock from behind stump and is about to hit Dave who catches his wrist) Don't do that lessen ye want me to break every wuthless bone in yer body. Ye have s tolen me home, made folks despise me as a thief, but ye shan't ruin this girl nor steal the one I love. "ow get away from her afore I forget the blood of the same mother flows in our viens and kill ye like a dog. (throws him aside and indicates L U) (Dave follows him to foot of run, Willis exits leaving Dave watching him off)

CURTAIN

ACT THREE

SCENE..... ROUGH INTERIOR

(X)

7		5
		X

X

8

6

XX

8

11

XX

1 2

5 4 5

EXPLANATION

1. Fire place with mantle and lamp
2. Rough bench
3. Bed and clothing
4. Kitchen table, axe handle and paper
5. Kitchen chairs
6. Table with water bucket, wash pan
7. Mirror comb and case towel
8. Interior door
9. Exterior door
10. Window
11. Pile of wood
- X. Interior backing
- XX. Interior backing

THIRD ACT

(Interior of Dave's lodgings near the saw mill the day following. Dave discovered at rise R at fire place gazing thoughtfully into fire place. After curtain rises and is well up Eben enters D R & sees Dave stops a moment, exits and knocks)

Dave

(quietly and without looking around) Come in. (slight pause Eben knocks again, Dave speaks loudly) Come in. (Eben enters)

Eben

(quietly and without looking at him) I wasn't quite sure you meant it the first time.

Dave

(gruffly) What do you want?

Eben

Same as always, nothing. (sits L of Dave) Ye kinda look put out about somethin'.

Dave

I am.

Eben

(shakes head hopelessly) So'm I. You and me aint got no homes no more.

Dave

(surprised) What has happened to you?

Eben

You know that old badlfaced parrat of mine?

Dave

Yes.

Eben

Well, the parson wanted to berry him so 's to entertain eh women folks at the festival the church was holdin' last night. I was kinda glad to laon him cause I thought maybe it'd do the bird some good to mix up with church folks.

Dave

Did it?

Eben

(scratching his head thoughtfully) Well, nothin' so yea could notice Right afore all the wommen the parson's wife put her face next to the cage and says, "Pretty Polly" jist as nice as you please. Ye know that parrot's uglier'n anything that ever wore feathers and it makes him sorter mad to have folks castin' reflections on his look of bueaty

Dave

What did he do?

Eben

Called her a liar and then began cussing in four different languages. Parson grabbed the cage and runn to the barn with it, then this morning he come up home actin' kinda peevish like. Said I played a dirty trick on pious folks and threatened to turn me ou en the church fer being so an outlaw as me.

Dave

I suppose Doc tanned you

Eben

Yeh, have got another suppose domin' while him and the parson was angry I sneaked out, reckon I'll have to stay overe here till the storm blows over.

Dave

(rising) I reckon ye had best not let folks see ye associating with me.

Eben

On 'count them thinkin' ye stole yer mother's money

Dave

Yes. (X to C)

Eben

(rising) D

Eben

(rising) Derned if I care what they think of me. I'd rather associate with you than a lyin' hypocrite like yer brother 'rise)

Dave

(pleased) You believe in me?

Eben

Yer doggones right I do and so does Paw only he's gotta be kinda diplomatic 'bout expressin' it.

Dave

(surprised) Why?

Eben

(sits on end of bench) Well you see its this way, Doc is sorta hankerin after my mother. (Dave shows surprise)

Dave

I didn't know that. (goes up to table C)

Eben

Neither did I, till I opened his eyes to what he's missin' When he's around her he's gotta be sort of neutral. (X R)

Dave

(smiling as he takes dipper of water) Issee neither--he to either agree with her addisay I am not innocent or keep his mouth shut

Eben

Yep ye know a man aint bound to be ieve all he says and I have been taught how to keep friends on both sides.

Dave

What does mother think of the courtin', (drinks)

Eben

Tait got that fer yet. (Dave glances at him in surprise) I'll kinda hate to lose Paw, cause he is the only father I have got, but I sure must do someth ng with him fer he's gettin' most moren' I kin manage all alone.

Dave

(comin' down C) And ye want to put more responsibility on mother?

Eben

Well, she's had more expereince with husbands than I have seein' that she's had two. Sides I'd rather see her get him than to have him gobbled up by some young female that would make a plumb fool out of him. (Dr disappears at window and coughs, glances in at Eben looks toward window, speaks with show of alarm) There he is (rises quickly as Dr goes away from window to R)

Dave

Ye had better run.

Eben

(quickly X'ing to Dave) I don't care what happens just so's he don't do nothing to me. (Dr enters D R C carries medicine case, shuts door, Eben tries to hide behind Dave)

Dr

Hello Dave. (Down " places case on bench)

Dave

Howdy Dr.

Dr

(glancing around and seeing Eben speaks kindly) Come here, Eben.

Eben

(shakes head) Nothin' doin. (L of Table)

Dr

I am not mad at yo. (starts to roll up sleeves of coat)

Eben

(shakes head) Can't soft soap me cause I've done fell into that trap so often.

Dr

I want to thank you for something.

Ebe

Yes you do? Ya'll thank me fer comin' over there with a slap just cause my parrot talks French in four different styles.

Dave

(smiles)

Dr

(smiling as he takes pocket book out) I want to give you a whole dollar. (takes coin from pocket book) Because you've bee the means of me be enriched this day

Dave

(to Eben) That's some inducement.

Ebe

Tait a enough though, a whole hide'll do me more service than a whole dollar.

Dr

(to Dave) Parson Jones and me had a rather heated arguemtn.

Dave

So Eben told me.

Dr

He threatened to sue me because the parrot was disrespectful to his flock, and I threatened to sue him for an unpaid bill of \$10.00

Dave

How'd ye end up?

Dr

Compromised by his paying the bill if I'd agree to enlarge my contributio toward his salary.

Dave

Did you?

Dr

(surprised) Certainly it was a good bargain

Dave

How much did he bribe y e?

Dr

Ten dollars. (Dave and Eben show surprise) And just to show him I would do the right thing I paid him the ten dollars right there and he went away happy.

Eben

Then how much are you ahead.

Dr

Ten dollars of course. Didn't I get the money

Eben

(scratching his head) Kinda 'pears to me the parson's done skinned you outer ten dollars.

Dr

Don't see how you make that out.

Dave

He paid his bill and---

Eben

He give back the ten

Dr

(pleased) As I promised.

Dave

The parson, has the ten his doctor bill is paid and you---

Eben

(disgusted) Aint got a dern cent to show for it.

Dr

(slight pause and then stokes chin smiles in beaten manner) It kinda daws on me that I have been bunseed. (shuckles) Funny how shapr some folks are.,(pause then glances at Eben in menacing manner)

It is your fault. (X's and glances at Eben) Hadn't been fer that dad ratte parrot it wouldn't have ahppened. (Dave X's R Eben quickly picks up axe handle and holds in threatening manner)

Eben

(edinging) I knowed yo'd blame me for somethin' afore ye got through. Everytime I let you outen my sight you do something foolish.

Dr

(chuckling) I guess you are right. (Dave goes up to window)

Eben

hat's the use of wastin' good advice on ye if ye don't listen to it.

Dr

I listen, Eben, you know I do.

Eben

(reproachfully) But ye go ahead and do as ye durn please. Remember paw, that a child is judged by its parents, and folks will think I'm gettin' mighty careless of you. (indignantly) Lettin' a preacher bamboozle ye outen ten good dollars, shame on you

Dr

Don't scold Eben, I'll promise faithful that it won't happen again.

Eben

(X's to him) Goin' up to see the widow. (Dave glances toward him)

Dr

Yes. (Eben lays axe handle on table.)

Eben

And ye boots aint shined.

Dr

This is only a professional call. I am going to treat her eyes.

Eben

Don't make no difference, ye can make it a courtin' call at the same time and not run no chances of somebody a beatin' y r time (astonished) and yer neck tie aint on.

Dr

(feels for necktie) Sure? Wonder wht I did with it? (feels in pocket find it, puts it on as Eben removes his hat and places it on bench, Dave comes down L of Dr Eben goes up to comb case and gets comb, then comes down R of Dr.)

Dave

Poc is there any chance of resturwin' her sight?

Dr

I have great hopes my boy, great hopes. (Eben brushes and combs Dr's hair in very earnest manner) I'll have her seeing as well as ever inside of three months. That is if no new complications set in.

Ebe

Bette win her out Paw afore her eyes get plumb cured cause if she ever gets a real good look at ye---yer cakes dough. (turns Dr around R) Lemm look at ye. (backsaway from him, looks in critical manner then steps closer, looks at side of his face, goes up to table, and takes down towel and dips end of towel in bucket of water)

Dr

(to Dave) Don't pay no attention to Eben; he's not repsonsiblē for all he says.

Dave

I think it wo ld be a good thing for both you and mother if you'd agree on the marryin' proposition.

Dr

You don't object to me makin' a run for the prize?

Dave

Not a bit. (Eben comes down with corner of towel wipes imaginary dirt fro right of Dr's cheeck , let this business be done as if Eben were really in earnest about his father's personal appearance)

Eben

(after wiping father's face) Now yer lookin' more respectable. (turns him aroun toward Dave) Let Dave look at ye. (Dave smiles Dr stands stiffly as if being inspected were not relished, Eben speaks to Dave) Aint he cute? Kinda resembles me and I aint takin' a back seat for nobody when it comes to looks.

Doctor

Eben, y are plumb silly at times.

Eben

If I wasn't I wouldn't think that I am your son. (Willis enters D R C from R makes slight n is e all turn to him)

Dr

(pleasantly) Howdy, Willis.

Willis

(pleasantly) Howdy how are you doctor. (comes down C)

Dave

(coldly to Willis) What do you want here?

Willis

To see you. (To Dr) Mother is expecting you Dr.

Eben

Git a move on you, no tellin' but what old Flapjacks nosin around.

Dr

You come with me (takes hat and goes upto door, takes medicine case Willis X R)

Eben

(blusteringly) Shucks, aint yet got gumption enough yesself. (going up) If I've gotta keep prodding ye all the time I might jist as well marry her on my own hook and have it done right. (both exit D R C'

Dave

(sternly) Now you talk quick and get outen here fer I aint wantin' none of yer company

Cillis

I came to see you about last nights affair. (sits on end of bench)

Dave

Well?

Willis

Hilda says that she has told nothing.

Dave

No, she done as I told her and locked the house agin you and me both

Willis

And you know absolutely nothing other than what you saw?

Dave

Its enough to prove they aint nothing at allt Hilda and me.

Willis

(with careless indifference) It might have been had not Hilda told Doris you promised to make her your wife.

Dave

I aint a believin' it.

Willis

It is immaterial to me, what you believe. Now I have a proposition to make to you

Dave

(angrily) I aint fer listenin (starts to D R C Willis rises and stops him)

Willis

(sternly) Don't be a fool. (indicating chair R of table) Sit down. (Dave glances at him a moment then crosses slowly to chair) The woods are not bit enough for both of us around here, so it is up to you to clear out.

Dave

(turns to him in amazement) You mean fer me to leave?
Willis

Exactly.

Dave

Well I aint a goin' to. I'm going to tell Flapjack that I saw you
a tryin' to sedak away with Hilda.

Willis

And get shot for your trouble. He is already suspi ons of you and when
I show him the letter---

Dave

(rises) You have got none.

Willis

Oh yes I have, Dlris and mother read it last night, you see we all
know you want to get rid of Hilda.

Dave

(hardly able to restrain himself) Ye wrote it yerself. (faces Willis
defiantly)

Willis

I found it just outside the saw mill.

Dave

(slight pause, speaks intently but not loud) Yer a durn sneakin' liar.

Willis

Perhaps. However no one except yourself will believe it. You know if
I showed that letter to Flapjack he will kill you

Dave

I reckon Hilda's word will clear me.

Willis

That word she won't speak. (Dave looks at him in surprise)

Dave

Why?

Willis

Because the little fool loves me too well, she will swear it was
you who tried to induce her to run away and in that way save my life.
(sternly) There is no use of arguing the matter for I have every
thing in my favor, no one would doubt my word when backed by the
evidence, while you wo ld be convicted on general principals.

Dave

Yer playin' a bold game

Willis

And one to win. (sternly) I will give you just twenty four hours to
leave here.

Dave

I aint a goin'

Willis

I am giving you a chance for your life. I don't intend that you shall
stand between me and my desires and if you are found here by t is time
tomorrow I'll show the letter to Flapjack.

Dave

(angrily as he makes a move to choke Willis, he steps back in fear)
I'd erter tear out yer lying tongue but ye aint worth haning' fer.

Willis

No doubt you wo ld enjoy killingme, but it wouldn't help you any.
You positively refuse to go.

Dave

Yes. The woods is my home and the home of the girl I love. They're
calling on me to fight fer my good name and hers, I'm a hearin'
the call of the woods and I'm needin' it.

Willis

(glancing at him with intent anger) Then no mercy will I show

you and in ten minutes, that letter will be in the hands of Hilda's father

Dave

And when ye give it to him say that I am waitin' right here. (slight pause, Willis looks at him as giving him another chance, then exits D R C goes L Dave watches him exit, goes to window and glances out, then comes down to table L and takes revolver from drawer looks at revolver satisfied, places it in pocket and X to bench R Eben appears in D R C look off L)

Eben

What's the matter with Willis? He is walking like there was a fire some place. (comes in)

Dave

He is going down to Flapjack's cabin I guess. (Eben comes down C)

Eben

We met the widow on the path and she's coming here.

Dave

Just mother?

Eben

An paw. (smiles) and somebody else.

Dave

(pleased) Doris?

Eben

Yep. (Dave goes quickly to mirror and arranges tie, smooths down hair with his hands Eben X's A turns to Dave) Gosh, ye don't need no sprucin up jist fer her.

Dave

(smiling) I want to see her at my best.

Eben

Reckon, Dave, yer like me and yer best is so durn awful they aint no hopes of improvement. (Dr and Mrs Hughes enter D R C Mrs Hughes wears old fashioned cloak Dave X's to her)

Dave

(joyfully) Mother! (starts to embrace her, she holds up detaining him)

Mrs Hughes

I have not come to renew a relationship.

Dave

(X down L) Won't insult ye if I offer ye a chair will I? (places chair)

Mrs Hughes

I am a little tired. (Dr with arm about her, leads her down C Eben glances at Dr and shows pleasure)

Dr

(kindly to Mrs Hughes) Right down this way, Widow. (places her carefully in chair) Are you comfortable?

Mrs Hughes

Quite I thank you, Dr. (Doris appears in D R C Dr X's to Eben winks and smiles in knowing manner. Dave sees Doris goes up to her, speaks in pantomime she shakes head sadly and comes down L of table)

Eben

(aside to Dr as he pokes him in the ribs) Keep it up paw, yer a doin' fine.

Dr

(aside) Any other suggestions to offer?

Eben

(aside) Kinda watch out and when ye come to the poppinpoint don't git so tongue tied ye'll make a mess out of the whole business.

Dr

I'll do my best.

Mrs Hughes

Where is Doris?

Doris

Here, Mrs Hughes.

Mrs Hughes

Did Dave sneak out?

Dave

(down " to Mrs Hughes) Not ye, but I will if ye folks is afraid I'll st
steal yer reputations or religions.

Eben

Paw and me aint got niehter and if y e don't believe it. (pulls
pockets of trousers) Search.

Mrs Hughes

(coldly) I didn't come to bandy words I want to know what you intend
tode about Hilda?

Dave

Nothin'. (Doris sits L of table)

Mrs Hughes

You mean to be a hard hearted villian as well as a thief (Dave winches
at the thrust)

Doris

(imploringly) Mrs Hughes---

Mrs Hughes

(impatiently to Doris) Not a word, I've made up my mind to speak plainly
and I mean to do it.

Dave

(bitterly) Ye never had no trouble a speakin' plain so far as I'm concern
Doris

(imploringly to Mrs Hughes) You promised if I would come with you
you would speak kindly and give him a chance to speak for himself.

Dave

(to Doris with a touch of sarcasm) Ye don't need to be askin' favors
fer me Doris. (Doris looks at him in surprise) I reckon if Motyer would
speak a kind word to me and mean it, the shock would kill us both.

(Dr sits on bench Dave crosses to firepalce)

Dr

(in patronizing manner) Now lets try and get this in a pea ceful manner,
I think---

Eben

Now ye best keep still, or ye'll say just the wrong thing at the right
time to kick up a fuss.

Dr

But---

Eben

Thats it exactly, ye want to butt into other folks business, you jist
peddle yer pills and let me (importantly) do the talkin' for
our family which family aint go nothin' to do with this nowhow.

(slight paus Dr glances at Eben in amazement, Eben speaks to hers)
Fight it out now, paw's shut up. (Dr folds hands meekly, Eben places
hand around his shoulder)

Dave

(to Mrs Hughes) What is it ye mean to say, Mother?

Mrs Hughes

I want to ask you if there is enough manhood in you to marry Hilda?

Dave

(smiling) I got enough manhood, but I'm kinda shy on nerve.

Mrs Hughes

Why (Eben quickly clasps hand over Dr mouth).

Mrs Hughes

Why do you refuse?

Dave

Cause I don't want her.

Mrs Hughes

Then why lead her to believe you did.

Dave

I didn't. (Mrs Hughes t

Mrs Hughes

Doris.

Doris

(looking at Dave) She told me so after you left last night.

Mrs Hughes

And we know you intended some harm to come to her or you would not have engaged some one as wicked as yourself to aid you in such a dish honorable thing as an attempt to spirit her away.

Dr

(quickly) I don't---(Eben repeats former business)

Mrs Hughes

You can't deny it for Willis showed me the letter.

Dave

(earnestly) What if I told you it was him. (Doris shows renewed interest Mrs Hughes indignant, Eben and Dr looks surprised)

Mrs Hughes

I wouldn't believe it.

Dave

(quickly and earnestly) And that he would get her away last night if I hadn't stopped him

Mrs Hughes

(rising indignant) Don't you dare accuse him of such a thing. (Eben Dr and Doris rise quickly Mrs Hughes hardly able to restrain her self)

Dr

(X quickly to her) Now, Mrs Hughes, just be quiet. (gently pushes her back in chair) Take it easy, take it easy.

Mrs Hughes

The idea! To dare suggest a thing about my boy. (Doris X to her)

Dr

(to Mrs Hughes) "e know you boy Willis is above reproach (glances at Dave and winks Dave smiles, Doris is attentive to Mrs Hughes, try to quiet her anger. Dr X to Dave and speaks aside) I had to say it Dave. Its policy you know. (Dave smiles and nods head approved)

Doris

(to Dave) When did it happen?

Dave

Co ldn't have been moren' ten minutes after I was talking to you. I was wantin to see her about them lies, so instead of comin' on home I hid behind a tree and waited till all you folks was gone. I got to the house jist as they was startin' away.

Doris

You are sure you went there immediately after we left?

Dave

Positive, Doc and Eben was the last to go.

Eben

That's right.

Doris

(to Mrs Hughes) You see Mrs Hughes, there may be a terrible mistake, we may be wronging Dave. Hilda may have told a falsehood to save Willis.

Mrs Hughes

No, Dave is the only one who has spoken falsely (Dave rises Dr crosses to her)

Dave

I didn't suppose ye would believe it.

Mrs Hughes

And why? Because every one here knows that Willis was not near the house at that time. 'all show surprise and look at each other in amazement and then to Dave)

Doris

(to Dave) He came up here to

warn you against her father.

Dr

Ummm---that's right.

Dave

He didn't go up the path

Mrs Hughes

He cut across to gain time.

Eben

Strikes me there is something wrong someplace. Willis said he was goin' to warn Dave, but did he? (all show surprise) That's the question?

Dr

Pretty good argument Eben

Mrs Hughes

But no logic.

Eben

Logic be durned so long as there is sense to it.

Doris

Couldn't Willis have given that as an excuse to get away from us?

Mrs Hughes

He wouldn't stoop to such deception.

Eben

Maybe he don't have to stoop, might come natural to him like.

Mrs Hughes

Now listen to me, Dave Ferguson, I'm your mother but I can see your faults.

Dave

They ain't a bit of doubt about that, if ye happen to miss one, I got a brother that points it out to ye.

Mrs Hughes

And I mean to treat you the same as any stranger who had been guilty of such an offence.

Dave

I couldn't kick if I was gettin' treated that way cause I would be shown some consideration.

Mrs Hughes

Hilda is a good girl and unless you go to Flapjack and confess your wrongs and make good your promises, I shall let him deal with you as he sees right and just.

Dave

I'm a sayin' no. (all show interest) Willis is at the bottom of all of this.

Mrs Hughes

I won't listen to a word against him

Dave

Ye will listen. He was here first afore ye, tried to force me to leave the woods. (Dr and Eben show surprise) I refused and he's gone to tell Flapjack more lies.

Mrs Hughes

More likely to plead with him to spare your life.

Dave

He's wantin' me killed, ye call yerslef my mother, but ye aint never done nothin' to show it. (Mrs Hughes bows head) Willis had had all yer love and protection, and now he has done wrong and yer tryin' to force me to take his sins on my shoulders. I aint a doin' it I've suffered enough on account of him and I will see myself cut into ribbons afore I give in.

Doris

(to Mrs Hughes) Mrs Hughes, wouldn't it be an act of justice if we would all go down to Flapjack's cabin and get at the bottom of the matter?

Dr

Good idea.

Eben

Couldn't said a better o e myself.

Mrs Hughes

It would be casting a reflection upon the honor of Willis, and you all know his life is like an open book.

Eben

(scratching head thoughtfully) "aybe so---but sometimes they is some filthy reading in open books."

Mrs Hughes

No one has led a cleaner life than my Willis and I won't cloud it by entertaining a suspicion against him (starts to D R C) Come, Doctor, we have done all we can here.

Dr

(undecided) But Mrs Hughes---

Mrs Hughes

"o straddling the fence, Dr, you must be either on my side or his. Which shall it be? (Dr looks beseechingly to Dave)

Dave

(aside) Go ahead, Dr.

Dr

Widow, I never knew you to be wrong in anything and I'm sticking close to you. (goes to her)

Mrs Hughes

Come dDoris (Doris starts Eben crosses quickly and intercepts her)

Eben

(to Mrs Hughes) I'll fetch Doris Paw has got something kinda private to say about the condition of your eyes, heart furture and welfare.

Mrs Hughes

(in D R C turn to Dave) Remember Dave we have beseeched you to do the honorable thing and you refuse, nobody but yourself will beseech blame for the consequences.

Dave

I am willing to take all that is coming to me for anything I have done. (Mrs Hughes exit D R C and go right)

Doris

(X to Dave) Isn't there some way out of this tangle?

Dave

I don't see none since Hilda is accusin me.

Eben

(R of table) Strikes me kinda funny he'd be saying it is you she wants and then be trying to run away with Willis, still they aint no countin fer the whims of women cause they always do just the opposite to what a human being would do.

Doris

(to Dave) Are you willing to go down to Flapjack's cabin

Dave

Yes.

Eben

(starts D R) Come on.

Dave

But not now. (Eben and Doris show surprise).

Doris

Why not?

Dave

I got my work to do here. (X L) I am goin' bat to the mill and finish up This evenin' ye can call fer me (exit D L)

Eben

Doris, he aint no guiltier than I am.

Doris

(sinking on bench) I wish I could be positive.

Eben

(X C) That's easy enough just say to yourself "My heads just bustint with positiveness" and it will. (sits in chair C)

Doris

But I don't seem to know my own mind.

Eben

Like to have you show me a woman as ever did.

Doris

When I am in his presence I can't help but feel he's honorable
and the moment I am away my mind is filled up with doubt.

Eben

And a head full of doubt, is just about as useful as a head full of
saw dust 'cause they aint enough good hard workin' brains in either
to set the world afire.

Doris

You are plain in your statemtns.

Eben

Somebody has got to be plain or ther is going to be a busted courtship
around here. Dwyre is all right, if it is Hilda that is standing in
yer way and all she wants is a husband, goggone if I won't marry
her myself to get her outen the way.

Hilda

(excitedly calling off L) Dave, Dave! (Doris and Eben rise quickly
and start up D R C) Hilda rushes past window and enters, her
hair is thrown carelessly about her face, aress torn, she shows
intense excitement, bretahting with difficulty)

Eben

What's the matter? (Hilda half swoons, Doris places arm about her
and brings her to chair C)

Doris

You are frightened, tell us what has happened.

Hilda

I----I----(frantically) Where is Dave, quick, father heem come to kill.

Eben

He is in the mill.

Doris

(to Eben) Warn him at once. (Eben starts to door L)

Hilda

No no (Eben stops) I tell heem, run quick stop father (Eben exits
quickly D R C and goes L to Doris) Mees ughes Doctor.

Doris

They just left here.

Hilda

Bring quick. I tell all I know about Dave maybe I save heem life.
(rises and half pushes Doris D R C) Quick run (Doris exits
quickly R C) Hilda watches her off for just a moment Willis passes
Window Hilda X L and is about to exit when Willis enters excitedly)

Willis

Hilda. (Hilda turns to him) Why have you come here?

Hilda

(meeting him L of C) Where father?

Willis

He is coming. I started home, but seeing you running through the under
brush, towards the mill I followed.

Hilda

I run quick, fall down, get up quick run like deer, tear dress bad,
but I not care so I get here to save Dave's life.

Willis

Have you wanred him?

Hilda

Not yet, I go now! (starts L he seizes her b hand and hurls her down R of table)

Willis

You shan't.

Hilda

I will.

Willis

Going to turn against me?

Hilda

You turn against me. (advances toward him) Hear you tell ~~everybody~~ everybody Dave who try to take me away last night. I hear you read heem letter say to get rid of me (fiercely) You lie to me, you get me away then not come like you promise.

Willis

You are not going to tell Dave anything about the money are you?

Hilda

Yes.

Willis

For God's sake don't do that, I'll be ruined---driven from home, an outcast.

Hilda

I not care.

Willis

Where is your professed love now? You would ruin me for revenge.

Hilda

My love turn to hate. You want to make me bad girl and for that I hate you. (hand on heart) Here (hand on head) all over I hate you like I once love. (fiercely) So much I hate you I tell Dave everything. that you steal mo eys. (Willis shows great fear) The ~~taskt-~~ truth I tell then no head sickness I have.

Willis

(pleadingly) Hilda keep silent about the money, let your father settle with Dave and I swear I will make you my wife before the whole village.

Hilda

You lie once, you lie again, no love you have for me, Once I give you my soul for your smile, but now I not have you for a husband if you give me the wo rld.

Willis

(savagely advancing toward her) You she devil! I've pleaded and begged but you won't listen I warn you if you say a word against me your life shall answer for it.

Hilda

(defiantly) I not fear such liar and coward.

Willis

(savagely) (as he reaches for axe handle on table) Against ask you silence.

Hilda

(defiantly as she steps back showing some fear) NO.

Willis

(in rage) Then you die. (starts for her, she utters slight exclamation of alarm and rushes right, he follows and exits immediately after her)

Hilda

(as soon as both exit peaks off R in alarm) Don't.

Willis

(off R) You promise. (sound of shuffling feet)

Hilda

No NO.

Willis

(savagely) Then take that. (Hilda screams sound of body falling

Willis enters showing alarm has axe handle in hand spot of blood on it glances back at door in fear and then at axe handle cross it in front of door) My God what have I done? (closes door sound of footsteps quickly drops behind cot. Dave enters D L shows surprise at not seeing any one. Seeing Willis rises quickly and starts to exit. Stops in door and looks A and L murmur of angry voices heard he motions frantically both A and L steps inside little later, Flapjack and Eben enter from L and come down L C -rs Hughes Doris and Dr enter immediately after them Flapjack has gun)

Flapjack

Whur's the scoundrel that fooled my girl?

Doris

(quickly as she comes down R) Where's Hilda?

Dr

We heard a scream.

Mrs Hughes

Like a woman in distress. (everyone shows excitement)

Dr

(to Willis who is at door) What's happened. You're as pale as a ghost.

Flapjack

My gal tell me whur is she?

Willis

(hoarsely in fear) Something terrible has happened. I fear I came here--heard angry voices in that room. (indicating D R) Heard a woman scream and then all was still (others look at each other in fear and amazement)

Flapjack

My Hilda she has been killed.

Eben

Lets not stand here like dummies, lets do something.

Dr

Force the door. (every one make move toward door as Dave enters quickly has axe handle in hand, stops in surprise at seeing others Flapjack raises gun as if to fire, Eben siezes it)

Doris

Hilda, where is she?

Dave

(hoarsel) There. (indicating room R) Hurry Doc (Dr exits quickly followed by Flapjack and Eben)

Mrs Hughes

(to Dave) Eh my boy---my boy why did you do such an awful thing?

Dave

(in amazement) Mother, accusin' me of this? (turns to Doris holds ou hands beseechingly) Doris?

Doris

(sinks back in horror) Don't come near me, your hands are stained with blood. (covers face with hands and X L Dave glances at handle drops it and looks at hands of Willis and Mrs Hughes comes down C'

Dave

I'm innocent. (Pleasding to all) Ye aint a believein me guilty of murder? (Eben appears in door R)

Willis

The evidence is there, you're a murderer and ther is no one to speak in your defense.

Eben

(coming quickly down R of Willis) Yes, they is.

Ones

whose?

Eben

(as he looks at Willis) Hilda's. The gal is not dead.

ACT FOUR

SCENE : JUDGE'S CHAMBERS IN COURT HOUSE THREE MONTHS LATER THAN THIRD ACT.

X

4

5

4

8

3

7 XX

XX 6

2

4

2

4 1 4

7

-
1. Large flat top desk with paper, law books, magazines axe handle used in third set.
 2. Settees
 3. Book case
 4. Office chairs
 5. Window
 6. Exterior door
 7. Interior door
 8. Hall tree
 - X Exterior backing
 - XX Interior backing.

ACT FOUR

Mrs Hughes and Doris discovered on settee Flapjack and Hilda on sette
 L Willis R of table women all dressed for street, Dt and Ebens hat
 on hall tree. Flapjack wears cap at rise Eben enters from
 D C and X to R ghe is dressed better than in other acts but not burlesque
 Doirs

(as Eben enters) What's the news? (all but Hilda show great interest)
 (she plays with rag doll but not to attract attention from scene)

Eben

The jury is still out.

Willis

Why don't they find Dave guilty and let us go home.

Eben

'Pears to me yer durn anxious to see your brother spendin' a few years
 in prison.

Willis

He attempted to murder the girl and justice must be done.

Eben

But it aint. If it was I'd bet my parrot to a mud hen, ye'd be draggin
 form the end of a rope.

Mrs Hughes

(shapply) Eben.

Eben

(to Mrs Hughes) I'm a meanin' it. If it hadn't been for him a testifyin
 the jury'd miss some ye told it over again.

Mrs Hughes

He is right. Willis if Dave is found guilty it will be through you.

Willis

Three months ago he committed his crime. you were all slapping me on
 the back for taking the stand I did.

Eben

If ye aint lost yer memory on somethings I think ye'll kinda remember
 I smacked ye on the mouth instead of the back.

Willis

You all priased me for wanting to see justice done that girl. (indicates
 Hilda) and now you are blaming me for doing it.

Doris

Justice mighty be tempted with mercy. Dave has been in custody for
 three months, that sure is sufficient.

Eben

If they find him guilty he will get about a hundred years.

Flapjack

(to Hilda who is trying to tie ribbon on doll) Can't you tie the ribbon?

Hilda

No (holds up doll) You tie. (Flapjack takes doll and tries to tie the
 ribbon)

Eben

(to Mrs Hughes and Doris) I'll bet if Hilda had her right mind she
 would tell something to make folks hair curl.

Doris

Why do you cling to that idea?

Eben

If you want to know right out and plain, I'll tell you, its cause I
 think Willis has lied from beginnin' to end. (Willis shows fear)

Willis

(picking up axe handle) This mute evidence did more to convict Dave
 than my testimony. You an't prove that I lied.

Eben

No you are doggone glad I can't. Maybe H

ilda will

get her mind back again some day and if she does they'll be hell poppin
(up to window)

Mrs Hughes

The Dr says she will never recover her memory unless Flapjack submits to an operation.

Flapjack

I won't allow it, they'll kill her sure, I aint a goin' to have nobody cuttin' on my gal. (gives doll to Hilda)

Doris

But it may be the means of saving an innocent man

Flapjack

I aint a carin' what they do to the man as struck her. They are not goin' to put no knife in my child's head.

Mrs Hughes

But it is your duty to her Flapjack; The Dr says there is a portion of the skull pressing against the brain and until that is removed she will always be as she is now.

Xoris

You surely don't want her to be as simpleas a child.

Flapjack

I'd rather have her as she is than not at all (places arm affectionately about Hilda) You don't want to have your head cut do you honey?

Hilda

(amazed) Head cut? (in fear nestles close to him) No --no!

Mrs Hughes

But---

Willis

Mother he knows what he wants. (all show surprise) Why try to induce him otherwise. (to Flapjack as he rises) Be firm flapjack, don't let some old quack Dr (Eben comes quickly down) Pull the wool over your eyes.

Eben

Call my paw a quack and I'll pull some wool over you. (Dr enters D L sees Eben pulling off coat)

Dr

Eben, what is the trouble? (comes down L of table)

Eben

He called you a quake.

Dr

Well, I am glad of that.

Eben

Ye are?

Dr

His bad opinion of me is the best recommendation I could get.

Eben

How's that?

Dr

Folks in general 'round our neighborhood are beginnin' to think a heap more of people he runs down than they do of them the--he says is allright

Willis

(to Dr) I'll not stay here to be insulted.

Eben

(glancing at Willis' feet) They aint no hobbles tied on yer feet.

Dr

And there is more than one way out.

Willis

(to Mrs Hughes) I'll be in the court room mother if you should want me. (exits D L)

Mrs Hughes

(to Dr) Dr, is it true what you say about the neighbors and Willis

Dr

Every word. What's more, widow you are coming in for your share of hard feelings.

Mrs Hughes

I don't understand.

Dr

The neighbors all liked Dave and they are not much pleased with the way you and Willis have treated him

Eben

Reckon they think he's gettin' sorta dirty deal.

Dr

They are shaming you for not showing him more motherly love. (Mrs Hughes bows head in hands, Doris places arm about her) If Dave is convicted--

Doris

Do you think he will be?

Dr

No doubt of it, if he is folks will say the widow's to blame.

Mrs Hughes

I'm not.

Dr

Yes, you are, widow I've done wrong just setting straddle of the fence between you and Dave and now I am afraid it is too late to help him. But I can say this much, if you had showed Dave a tenth of the love you've showed Willis, we wouldn't be here today waiting to hear whether he is to be a free man or a convict.

Doris

(rising nervously) A convict. This is terrible (goes up to window back to audience wipes away tears Dr X to Mrs Hughes)

Dr

I always did think of Dave as upright and honest. (Hilda goes to Doris)

Mrs Hughes

Dr, Quackenbush, you have told me I don't know how often---

Dr

I know that widow, but I was doing it for a purpose (Flapjack goes up to window)

Eben

Paw you aint got no sense; ye'll spoil the whole business.

Dr

Let her spoil (Eben drops hopelessly in chair) I'm going to speak my own mind for once.

Mrs Hughes

What was your purpose in deciving me in making me believe you were on my side.

Dr

I was soms what personal I had hopes----I might say fond hopes that siding with you would---

Eben

(after pause, Dr little embarrassed) Go on paw, ye have throwed the fat in the fire so you mitht as well blow up the whole sheebang and have it over with.

Dr

I dreamed that---

Eben

No ye didn't I told ye.

Dr

You want to tell her?

Eben

(as Dr gets up) Well I kin. (pushes Dr down in chair he has vacated) Pa got the idea from me that you kinda took to him for a third husband. (Mrs Hughes shows surprise) You got the money and land,

paw and me's got the brains and looks so we thought it would

be a bargainhall the the way around. That's why we kept on the fence in this matter.

Mrs Hughes

Dr you are a fool

Dr

I know it.

Eben

(to Mrs Hughes) "hey'll be two of ye unless we get together on the marryin' business.

Mrs Hughes

I haven't thought of a third husband.

Eben

Now is a good time to begin, think of the good pa's done ye. he has got yer eyes most well

Dr

Which speaks of my professional reputation

Eben

He has got a son, meanin' myself, that he wil throw in for good measure.

Dr

And the parrot----

Eben

Kin cuss some refined (motions Dr to come to him while continuing to talk to Mrs Hughes) Dr rises and comes to Eben) and that is givin' ye both a good satrt. (placing hand on Dr shoulder and steps back to give her a good chance to look him over) Look him over widow. He's got an arm that can circle any waist of normal size, and eye that can see a purty girl a mile off. Lips so sweet they make lemons taste like honey and his legs is good for twenty miles a day without a wabble. (proudly) Now if he aint some prize I aint no judge of horse flesh. (Dr whispers in Eben's ear. Eben speaks quickly as if he forgot something) And fifty eight this comin' spring and ye'll say so yerslef if ye look at his teeth (aside to Dr) Say something nice and convincin' I'm run down.

Dr

"e know widow you are not going to live much longer and that's why we want to marry you

Mrs Hughes

What! (rises)

Eben

'raises hands in despair) Paw (Dr backs away in fear)

Dr

Wasn't that convincin'

Eben

Convinces me that your plumb insane.

Dr

I guess my wanting to get married is another proof of it.

Mrs Hughes

Dr, I think your proposal is very ill timed, considering the trouble I am in

Dr

Widow, I----

Eben

(to Dr) Keep still paw or ye will get yer foot in it again. (to Mrs Hughes) Widow, I'm purposin' fer paw now. 'sist cause ye are in trouble and he is the best remedy I know of, since paw done blabbed it (look at Dr in disgust) they aint no use denyin' we had some designs on your land and money but they are small in comparison of what comfort we would be to you. If Dave is sent up it'd be kinda nice to have me around givin' a soothing word. (Mrs Hughes sets)

Mrs Hughes

Mrs Hughes

Dr, I can't give you an answer now

Dr

No hurry, widow, no hurry

—ben

(despariggly to Dr) There ye go again (Dr surprised) Doggone it, why didn't ye say i wasno w or never goes up stage)

Mrs Hughes

Dr (X's to her she glances up stage) I've always believe d you a truthful man (move a little to one side he sets close L to her)

Dr

I try to be widow.

Mrs Hughes

You have spoken to me of marriage before.

Dr

I've tried to you mean

Mrs Hughes

Answer me trufully is it my land or my monay?

Dr

Widow, I will tell the t ht if I lose you, at first mind you only first when nobling offspring mentioned you as a possible addition to our family I was mercenary enough to have such thoughts.

Mrs Hughes

How?

Dr

I'll take you money or not. You have been failing in health the last three months and it is caused by worry

Mrs Hughes

Yes.

Dr

It is company that you need.

Mrs Hughes

Perhaps.

Dr

I don't believe you are void of all love for Dave,

Mrs Hughes

It has been awakening since I fear I'll never see him again, since I've read my own heart and seen the injustice of my selfish love for Willis.

Dr

When he is convicted, when you relaize yo yourself are to blame, you will have need of me, I'm not much widow but I will be a comfort to you as much as I can.

Mrs Hughes

Wait until we have the jury's verdict about Dave and I will give you mine about yourself.

Dr

Couldn't you give me a hint now?

Mrs Hughes

Well---

Dr

Yes, yes yes?

Mrs Hughes

If he is found guilty, youwould be a great prop for me to lean on--

Dr

And if found innocent?

Mrs Hughes

I'd take him back into my house, and try to make up for my past neglect.

Dr

(disappointed) Wo ldn't be any use for me su I suppose

Mrs Hughes

(laying hand on arm) The house is large, and we would make one big happy family.

Dr

(shouts) Booray (ll look at him in amazement Flapjack and Hilda down L Doris down R to Mrs Hughes, Eb n down L of Dr) By cracky I've done it Eben, she is gbin' to stake me whether or no (shekas hands with Eben then X's to Flapjack and shakes hands)

Eben

Now if we only had Dave out of this---

Doris

(playfully to Mrs Hughes) Oh you naughty haughty girl.

Mrs Hughes

I wish you and Willis---

Doris

(shaking head) No use, Mrs Hughes. The one I love, I'll never have.

Dr

By cracky you will have him if I can get him fer you (to Flapjack) Flapjack I am as certain as I'm standning here that that girl (indicating Hilda) holds the secret that will cther Dave.

Flapjack

(taking Hilda in his arms to protect her) She lwd him he fooled her and tried to kill her. She is mine now and alluse will be no amount of aryan'll change me (Hilda looks at them in childish manner as if not understand them)

Eben

Now if we only had Dave out of this trouble, and if Hilda had her right mind, I am sure she would say something that would set him free.

Dr

If my opinion is correct, I know it is, an operation will restore her right mind. Twill relieve the pressure from the brain and she will pick up the threads of reason at the points he dropped them

Eben

Eh, that pint is at the time and place when she was knocked in the head. (picks up axe handle) With this here axe handle.

Dr

I'll give you five hundred dollars, every cent I have, for the privilege of making the operation

Flapjack

No I am afraid ye'll kill her.

Doris

Dr, isn't there any other way.

Dr

There are cases like this that have gone on for years and an accident a chance blow on the head, have done the work of an operation.

Mrs Hughes

If I could only see Dave and offer him a few words of consolation an

Dr

Yes. (Hilda goes up to window Flapjack follows her

Eben

Wish I knewed the right spot to hit, deggones if I woldn't try it on her. (looks cr tically at axe handle and then lays it down)

Dr

(to Mrs Hughes) If her reason is every restored, Widow I firmly believe the revealtion she will make will be a shock to you.

Mrs Hughes

You mean, she will accuse Willis?

Dr

I believe so.

Doris

I am positive of it. (Mrs Hughes shows surprise)
Mrs Hughes

Doris.

Doris

It can't be that Dave is guilty he is too good too noble, his story on the witness stand had the ring of truth.

Mrs Hughes

I was almost forced to believe so myself.

Eben

And Willis kinda stammered and stuttered at times.

Dr

(to Mrs Hughes) You must acknowledge that widow.

Mrs Hughes

Yes.

Doris

And Willis was so anxious to help convince the jury of Dave's guilt.

Eben

That made me suspicious of him if nothing else did.

Dr

(to Mrs Hughes) Mind you, Widow, we are not saying that Willis is guilty but we are claiming Dave is innocent and preparing you for the shock if the tables turn and you will find the one you loved trusted is the scoundrel in place of the one you cast out of your life.

Mrs Hughes

I am prepared for any shock that may come, and if my trust in Willis is ever at fault, if I find that he is the scoundrel I'll let the law take its course as with Dave.

Dr

Can't you find it in your heart to have a little sympathy with him now?

Mrs Hughes

I have Dr, I pity him and would do anything to make his burden lighter.

Dr

Then why don't you send for him him, give him a word of encouragement.

Mrs Hughes

Will they let me see him here?

Dr

Yes.

Mrs Hughes

Tell him to come to me (Eben exits quickly D L)

Flapjack

Widow, it won't do for me to git too close to him. They would never get the chance to send him to prison I am goin' out so as to keep from doin' murder. Come hilda starts R 4)

Doris

Leave her here.

Flapjack

(amazed) In company of him as would kill her (savagely) Never. We'll set in our buggy and wait till the jury comes in. Call me Dr cause I'm itching to hear the words as says he is guilty (exit D R U with hilda Eben enters quickly D L)

Eben

(come L) He is comin' (Dr goes up stage)

Mrs Hughes

(to Doris) I am almost ashamed to face him. (Doris places arm about her Doris

Be brave for he won't blame you. (Dave enters D L pale and haggard and moves slowly as if tired, Dr shakes hands with him and leads him down

.)

If an officer enters with Dave, Willis can double)

Dave

Mother holds out arms to her---she looks at him a moment)

Mrs Hughes

(brokenly) My son, my son, rushes in to his arms, Eben and Dr turn away Dr goes up to super)

Dr

(to super) Leave them together, John. If you think he'll make an escape you can guard that door (indicates D R U) (super bows and exits D R Eben and Doris join Dr upstage)

Mrs Hughes

(brokenly) Oh my son, my son can you ever forgive me I'm to blame it is all my fault, I can't give you up, I can't.

Dave

Don't blame yer self mother. I reckon ye have done what ye thought was right.

Mrs Hughes

(as if hysterical) I've been wicked, cruel, unjust. Now that you are about to be taken from me, I see my hideous faults. (rush hands across cheeks) I never love you till now.

Dave

You love me mother.

Mrs Hughes

Yes yes, it has come to torture me for my past sins. I want you, my first born, but they'll take you from me (half screams) They shan't They shan't (clings to him)

Dr

(soothingly) Maybe they won't maybe I'll get off free, but even if they don't I'd be willing to die this minute knowing you love me (brokenly) Mother, mother (drops head on her shoulder)

Dr

(kindly as he comes down) Come come no more of this, we'll hope for the best. (Dave leads Mrs Hughes to settee she sits)

Doris

(Doris coming down C) The jury is out so long doesn't that argue for good

Dr

Yes (Dave sits besides Mrs Hughes she takes his hands in hers)

Dave

I thought that Flapjack and Bilda were here?

Eben

(looking out window) They are settin' out there in the horse and buggy

Dr

Didn't want to see me, I reckon (Dr nods Yes)

Eben

(looking out window) That there colt of his is gettin' kinda like Canadians.

Dr

(going up to window) The cold air makes him want to run (Doris sits L of table)

Mrs Hughes

Tell me how do you feel about it?

Dave

Sometimes I have hopes and sometimes I don't.

Doris

Oh why don't they return a verdict and relieve this awful suspense. (ises and goes up D L glances off D X to her)

Dave

Whatever my fate is I'm ready to take it It'll go kinda hard if I have gotta go to prison for a crime I

didn't

commit. (Mrs Hughes buries face in hands) Ye see I've always been free and I reckon the call of the guard won't sound as good as the call of the woods. That'll hurt pretty bad cause every tree in the forest knows me and they'll be disappointed when they call and I ain't a comin'.

Dr

(coming down) Cheer up Dave keep up yer courage. (Doris comes down L)

Dave

(to Doris) If I gotta go, they is somethings I would like to have ye good friends do for me.

Dr

We'll do anything in ur power.

Dave

(rising) Well, Doc, ye have been mig ty good to mother; jest kinda keep it up will ye?

Dr

Yes.

Dave

(brokenly) She is getin' old and---and maybe afore I git out---she won't be no more, it'll make me feel better o know you are lookin' after her.

Dr

You can trust me Dave (wipes eyes)

Dave

And you, Doris. (Doris looks up) Ye had cause to doubt me.

Doris

I'm not doubting now, Dave, I fee that you are innocent.

Dave

If this hadn't come up we would been happy (when glances at them)

Doris

Yes.

Dave

That old oak tree we used to sit under of evenin' s is getin' kinda slighed, we ll you go down thers sometimes and tell him Dave is innocent.

Doris

Yes. (drops in chair, overes face with hands and weeps)

Eben

Doggone if they snt said yet that you are guilty.

Dave

I'm a feelin' they ill (murmers of voices heard off L Willis enters quickly from DL)

Mrs Hughes

The verdict, the verdict.

Willis

(R of table) We'll leave in just a moment 'slight pause, everyone intently listeing)

Flapjack

(off right in chan ed voice) Your honor we the jury find the prisner slight pause) Guilty. (a moment pause all look at each other, Willis shows divided relief, Doris drops in chair & covers face with hands)

Mrs Hughes

(with deepest emotion but does no scream) Oh my boy---my boy. (half staggers, he steps quickly down to her, she falls forward on his breast)

Dave

(to Dr) She has fainted (Dr X's quickly to them they place her on settee)

Dr

(as he X's speaks to Willis) Water. (Willis exits D L Dr rubs Mrs Hughes hands)

Eben

(excitedly) Look out Dave (Dave turns to him) Flapjack's coming
(looks out window shows alarm) He has left Hilda in the buggy. (very excited) She is whippin that colt he has broke loose rapid sounds of horse hoofs Hilda screams Doris and Dave rush to window)

Doris

She'll be killed.

Dave

The buggy's turned over.

Eben

Landed right on her head rush out D U R Willis enters from D L U with glass of water comes down to D R

Willis

Anxiously (to Dave and Doris) What's the matter?

Doris

Flapjack's horse has run away (horse effects gradually subsides) Doris looks out window Dr gives Mrs Hilda drink of water, she shows signs of returning consciousness

Hilda

(screaming off R) Help, help.

Dave

She is runnin this way. (Willis as if unconscious of moment picks up axe handle and stands looking toward D R) like some one was after her.

Hilda

(frantically off R) Dave, Dave sound of hurrying feet off R and murmur of voices Hilda makes rush in door her hair is disheveled look of terror on her face, she turns toward D R as she crosses down C) They keel. (Dave and Doris X quickly down R C) Run for your life. (Flapjack and Eben enter D R C and come down Flapjack R of Dave. Eben cross to R of Dr Hilda has not seen Willis who stands terrified for a moment, she turns and almost collides with him then recognizes Willis who in unconscious manner is holding axe handle. Hilda screams rushes up R of Dave) Save me not let hem kill. (clings to Dave and then at Willis in wonder) He keel.

Flapjack

Kill what do you mean?

Hilda

I mean to save Dave's life. (To Willis) Heem follow me.

Dave

Who struck you?

Hilda

I know and I tell (excitedly) Heem heem see club (Willis drops handle)

Willis

It is a lie, the girls crazy

Dr

The fall from the buggy has restored her reason (to Hilda) Why did he strike you?

Hilda

Because I say I tell the truth about Dave.

Doris

What truth?

Hilda

It was heem, mooney not Dav steal, I see heem (indicating Willis) Take it, but not tell because I loved heem heem promised to make me grand wife but he keel me for silence.

Doris

You said it was Dave you loved.

Hilda

No, no heem tell me father want me to do all heem say, I believe heem

And he try to get me run away to beeg town for marry. Dave
stop me, not let heem take me, when I hear heem lie to father I know
heem want to make me bad girl, when the truth I say to tell heems
say he keel me for silence. (Flippjack makes start for Willis Dave stops
him)

Willis

(to Mrs Hughes) Mother, you don't believe this? (steps toward her, she
holds up hand detaining him) Its a lie, a lie!

Eben

Tell it to the jury. (takes him by back of the neck and forces him
into chair R of table Hilda goes into Flapjack's arms he carrieses her)

Mrs Hughes

(up to Dave) Dave, you are innocent, my hand and heart are calling you
Dave. (Dave places arm about her)

Doris

(taking his right arm and placing it about her waists) And so are mine.

Dr

Mine to the widow.

Dave

(to both) They are both better than the call of the woods. (Eben brushes
Doctor's hair, arranges tie as curtain falls)

C U R T A I N

THE

END